

Hafa Adai!

# Saipan Tribune

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## OPINION METER

This week's poll:

With the recent tragedy in Connecticut, should the U.S. implement stricter gun control laws?

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## INSIDE

### BUSINESS



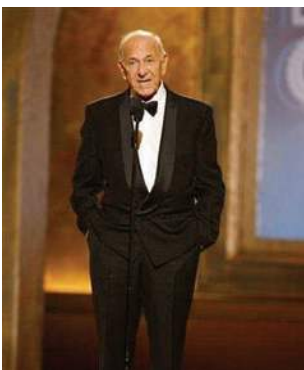
Shoppers who waited until the final days before Christmas were rewarded with big bargains and lighter crowds. **» PAGE 13**

### ASIA



A rocky group of islets off Taiwan form part of what military strategists call the "first island chain." **» PAGE 15**

### LIFE & STYLE



For many, Jack Klugman will always be the messy one. **» PAGE 20**

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## Family believes sisters already dead



Faloma

Maleina

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

Christmas Day yesterday marked one year and seven months since the mysterious disappearance of sisters Faloma and Maleina Luhk in As Teo, Saipan with still no trace of them.

Elbert Quitugua, the grandfather of the Luhk sisters, told *Saipan Tribune* on Friday that the disappearance of her grandchildren is now a ne-

glected case.

"What the government or the Department of Public Safety is doing to the missing sisters? Nothing! The family is still grieving and suffering," Qui-

**» Christmas Day marks 19th month of Luhk sisters' disappearance**

tugua said.

He said since DPS closed its Command Center in Kagman last year, he has not heard of any update of the investigation from DPS and the

Office of the Attorney General.

Quitugua said the Fitial administration should look into the aspect on how DPS is handling the investigation.

"So many unanswered questions in this case," he said.

Quitugua, however, believes that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is really on top of the case.

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## Arctic Circle Air delivers mail

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**  
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REPORTER

Arctic Circle Air Services, Inc. is further bridging the gap in the delivery not just of cargo but also mail following the signing of a contract that allows for the company to transport mail between the CNMI and Guam, less than two months since it commenced its cargo flights.

As this developed, Arctic Circle Air is already looking at expanding its operations, with plans to purchase another aircraft that would also provide effective and reliable shipping solutions within the islands.

Company officials Tony Pellegrino and Paul Zak announced Friday's launching of the mail delivery services of Arctic Circle Air at the Commonwealth Development Authority's Development Corp. Division meeting

**See MAIL on Page 4**

**» Company also eyes additional aircraft**



### SINGING KNIGHTS

Congregates at the Aging Center were last Thursday visited by about 100 students from Mount Carmel School who sang yuletide carols to get the seniors in the spirit of Christmas.

**See story on Page 5**

## 'Governing body' for corporation established, more critical posts filled

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**  
[moneth\\_deposa@saipantribune.com](mailto:moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. submitted on time to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid the required additional plan of corrections on the 13 conditions of participation CMMS earli-

er identified. The corrective plan clearly establishes the corporation's governing body and filled two critical positions required by CMMS.

Corporation CEO Juan N. Babauta and COO Esther Muna disclosed to *Saipan Tribune* that CHCC submitted a

**See GOVERNING on Page 4**

## CNMI cancels Honors Scholarship program

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**  
[moneth\\_deposa@saipantribune.com](mailto:moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

Graduating high school students who wish to continue their studies through the government's Honors Scholarship program can no longer avail of the assistance after the Fitial administration confirmed that the program will end this month.

Pursuant to Public Law 14-37, the CNMI Scholarship Office can only offer the Honors Scholarship program through December 2012.

According to Press Secretary Angel A. Demapan, the only way to continue offering this scholarship is through an amendment of the law.

"This is a result of a sunset provi-

**See SCHOLARSHIP on Page 4**

# Local



A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority  
*Tourism is everybody's business.*



## China International Travel Mart

In partnership with **Century Tours**, the **Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA)** participated in the **2012 China International Travel Mart (CITM)** in **Shanghai** on Nov. 15-18, 2012.

CITM is the largest professional travel mart in Asia and has drawn the attention of people in the tourism industry worldwide. Participants include international and domestic tourist organizations, travel agencies, hotels, airlines and related travel companies. In November, over 100 exhibitors participated and approximately 100,000 visitors attended.

The MVA's booth was in the **U.S. Pavilion** along with **Florida** and **California** and major cities such as **New York** and **Las Vegas**. The MVA team did several interviews with local media, mainly promoting newly-launched charter flights from Beijing to Saipan. The first charter was launched during CITM and was a highlight of the interviews. More than 3,000 patrons visited the MVA booth, and face-to face meetings were held with 20 key agents.

In FY 2012 the Northern Marianas received nearly 80,000 visitors from China, 70 percent more than the previous year.



This Tourism Tuesday space is provided by Saipan Tribune

## 'Exempting Filipino workers from FICA gives justice to workers, employers'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Senate Floor Leader Pete Reyes (IR Saipan) said the U.S. Internal Revenue Service's decision to waive collection of Federal Insurance Contribution Act or FICA taxes on wages from Filipinos working in the CNMI gives justice to the temporary workers and also the employers.

In an interview on Friday, Reyes said he is glad that IRS made such a decision because the Filipino workers are not entitled to benefits especially if some of them are just working

for two years.

"They do not meet the threshold of 40 quarters. They technically lose that until and even if they reach 65, they are not entitled to receive any benefits," the senator pointed out.

FICA covers Social Security and Medicare taxes.

In its Dec. 17 announcement, IRS said Filipinos working in the CNMI need not pay federal taxes between now and Dec. 31, 2014.

IRS, however, stated that em-

ployers must withhold and pay FICA taxes on wages paid to

Filipino workers who do not hold H-2 status in the CNMI "after Dec. 31, 2014"—the end of the immigration transition period.

Reyes said FICA collection is a heavy burden on the employers especially at a time of economic

hardship.

"Employers need to survive. So this is a welcome resolve and it's a good Christmas gift to the workers and the employers alike," he said.



Reyes

The senator said the FICA money collected if spent instead in the Commonwealth, would stimulate the economy because of the multiplier effect.

Asked if IRS should reimburse the workers and the employers, Reyes said he does not know how IRS is going to treat those that have paid.

"I know that the ruling that was made prospectively is going to waive the FICA collection. Retrospectively, I don't know. It's a federal thing. So I don't think that I should comment on anything that is not within our power or control," he added.

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# Dandan sex maniac strikes again

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_deltorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The sex maniac on the loose in Dandan struck again, but this time he was nearly caught inside a house when a mother and her daughter immediately called police early Monday morning.

The victims were not injured, but were traumatized with the maniac's attack.

There is a strong possibility that police could finally identify the suspect as he left behind at the scene evidence—a shoe described as a black “Croc” style slip on shoe (slipper) with yellow interior and measuring about 11 inches long.

The suspect is described as a local male, about 5'5" tall, skinny. At the time, he was wearing dark shorts and a green shirt covering his face.

The suspect's descriptions fit the descriptions of a sex maniac who was believed to be behind a series of sexual assaults on at least two young women and two girls in three separate incidents in Dandan in the early part of this year.



Tarkong said investigation showed that, a local woman in her early 20s was awakened when someone was touching her chest.

The woman screamed, waking up her mother, who was sleeping next to her on the same bed.

The mother grabbed the bed sheets and threw it on the suspect to distract him. The daughter then kicked the maniac away.

The suspect, who was armed with a kitchen knife, swung the weapon at the mother and her daughter. The victims managed to push the suspect outside the bedroom.

The victims closed and locked the bedroom door. The

mother called 911 to report the incident.

The suspect shouted at the victims to open the door and threatened he would kill them. He stabbed the bedroom door several times with the knife, leaving a hole on the door.

The suspect escaped before police officers arrived at the scene.

Police learned that the suspect managed to enter the house through the kitchen window, which was cut open.

The victims lost a pair of black “Scotts” slippers about seven inches long that the suspect possibly took during his escape.

Three other sexual assault incidents happened on March 25 and 30, 2012, and April 2, 2012, all occurring around 4am inside homes in Dandan. The victims in those cases were also sleeping when the suspect entered the bedrooms. The maniac was never identified or arrested.

**CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**  
Photo of a black “Croc” style slip on shoe (slipper) with yellow interior measuring about 11 inches long police believe belongs to the man behind several sexual assaults in the Dandan Village area this year.

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## RESPONSIBLE SHOP OWNER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An unidentified shop owner on Garapan Street cleans his share of the public sidewalk in front of his computer repair shop daily. He cleans it daily since the Saipan Chamber of Commerce awarded a student basketball club funds for thoroughly cleaning both sides of the street under the Chamber's Cash for Trash program. The Chamber congratulates this business for their community spirit and their act of making Saipan a cleaner tourist destination.

## GOVERNING

From Page 1

217-page report on the Dec. 17 deadline and they are optimistic on the positive response from Medicare.

Among the highlights indicated in the new report is the identification of a governing body that would ultimately decide on hospital operations which members comprise of the corporation's CEO, COO, chief financial officer, and director for medical affairs.

Babauta and Muna revealed that for many years, there's always a misunderstanding on who calls the shots at the public hospital. Authority to decide on the operations of the Commonwealth Health Center previously lies with either the secretary of public health, or the hospital administrator, or the executive branch through the finance secretary who cuts the checks for all CHC expenses.

"So now, it's very clear [on this report] that all decisions will be made by the governing body on all issues especially on critical supplies, equipment repair and replacement, and hiring of personnel," said Muna.

The two said days are gone when doctors are being hired through direct communication with fellow physicians. With the new system, all doctor-applicants would undergo interview from the governing body to ensure all documentations are provided such as verification of character and verification of experience and skills.

"In short, we're putting a system of accountability in our public hospital," said Babauta, adding that human resources though will keep the recruitment process for the organization.

Also included among the major highlights of the new report is the hiring of infection control coordinator and quality assurance performance improvement coordinator—two positions identified critical to meet the CMMS' requirements.

Muna said these two positions will directly report to the governing body to inform the condition and situations in all CHC departments in a quarterly basis.

Babauta and Muna admitted that the issue on defibrillators could have been prevented and addressed if better communication and effective system have been earlier established.

CHC was slapped its first immediate jeopardy status in September after CMMS uncovered the lack of units in key sections of the hospital. This was later addressed upon procurement of new units.

Staff training regarding continuing education about the patients' rights has also been set in the new report, according to the officials.

### Medicare expected to validate new report

Muna and Babauta said that they are expecting a team from CMMS to conduct another site visit to validate the contents of the Dec. 17 submission from CHCC. The two however, cannot immediately say the time period, pointing out that CMMS' visit is always unscheduled.

After the Dec. 17 submission, *Saipan Tribune* learned that CHCC will wait for the review of CMS, which may ask for further plans on how to correct the 13 citations if not fully satisfied with the latest report.

On Dec. 7 letter to CHCC, CMMS extended the deadline until Feb. 13, 2013 the revocation of CHCC's accreditation.

"It's much easier to get money once you're operating. That's why other people have approached us and they want to participate with us," said Zak.

Arctic Circle Air delivers not only agricultural produce and mail but also other goods and merchandise. From the time it began its operations, the company has delivered a whole gamut of commodities, including frozen goods, milk, potato chips, medical supplies, among others.

Zak said they've been surprised by the volume of other high-demand products such as high-valued cargo and chocolates, which average about 6,000 lbs per week to be sold at different tourist stores on Saipan.

More than a week ago, Zak said Arctic Circle Air was able to deliver 500 lbs of ice cream for Rota, ensuring that the residents of the southern island will satisfy their sweet tooth this holiday.

While focused on cargo, Arctic Circle Air also takes passengers on a charter basis. The airline has already serviced IT&E, the Public School System, and Tan Holdings, among others.

To charter a flight or for more information, call 288-8877.

## 'Shared governance remains a big challenge at NMC'

Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart, Ph.D., and the Board of Regents should lead by example and practice what they preach about transparency and accountability, according to NMC staff senate president Marie Coleman.

Speaking before Friday's board meeting, Coleman pointed out the need for "team effort" to fulfill the missions and goals of the college for its students.

As the staff leader, Coleman reiterated that she's fully aware of her roles and responsibilities and has been fulfilling these tasks since the beginning.

"These are all well-documented as I have taken the time to ensure that those communications are readily available for reference if needed and are contained in a large black binder that is now practically filled," reported Coleman, in ensuring that she made sure all concerns of staff are relayed to management.

"I fully agree with Dr. Hart that this needs to be a team effort that includes transparency and accountability and so we look to the president's leadership and the BOR to lead us by example and to be the role models, both ethically and responsibly," said Coleman.

She added that NMC needs the leadership to help prevent and diffuse situations and to foster an environment that empowers and encourages the discussion of ideas and effective communication for the good of the institution and its students without ignoring or discounting the

needs, concerns, and recommendations through shared governance.

She admitted that shared governance at the college continues to be a problem.

"It continues to be challenge due to numerous reasons and evidence, which makes it extremely difficult to build more trust, confidence, and support for the leadership," she said.

Coleman said she hopes that in the next "staff climate survey", this will show positive results based on the college progress and improvements in the weak areas that were previously identified based on the 85 percent of the staff who participated.

It was early this year when the staff senate conducted a climate survey, the first initiated in the college. However, the result of this survey was never made public citing confidentiality of "internal documents" of the college.

*Saipan Tribune* learned that this survey asked staff members working in different departments about the various aspects of their jobs. The topics of the questionnaire included job satisfaction, job conditions, expectations, perception of job security, and opportunities for growth.

Recently, the NMC faculty issued a no confidence vote on Hart, citing among others the lack of shared governance of her leadership. NMC has two types of personnel: staff and faculty employees. (*Moneth G. Deposa*)

## SCHOLARSHIP

From Page 1

sion in the enabling legislation for the Honors Scholarship. Therefore, the CNMI Scholarship Advisory Board has decided that the CNMI Scholarship Office can no longer accept new applicants for the Honors scholarship," said Demapan.

Demapan confirmed that only those previously awarded the Honors scholarship and are currently in progress of their studies and continue to meet the requirements will continue to receive the award. This means that the program is no longer available for new applicants starting in January 2013 and will only wait for the completion of studies of the ongoing scholars.

"This program was a legislative creation. Therefore, in order for the program to be extended or implemented anew, it would have to be done by way of legislation and enactment into law," said Demapan.

The Honors Scholarship is one of the two programs offered by the CNMI Scholarship Office and is included in its \$2-million yearly budget appropriated by the Legislature. The other program and the only one to be offered by the Scholarship Office is the Educational

Assistance Program, or EAP.

Financial assistance under the Honors Scholarship program is merit-based and assessed on criteria such as academic achievement, service to community, and participation in extracurricular activities. To qualify, applicants must have graduated from a high school within the U.S. or one of its territories and has attained the highest scholastic achievement with a 4.0 or higher cumulative grade point average.

Recipients of these Honor Scholarship awards are chosen by the Scholarship Advisory Board through a blind-selection process. Applicants who are not chosen are eligible to receive financial assistance under the EAP.

*Saipan Tribune* learned that the Honors Scholarship program receives 30 percent of the CNMI Scholarship Office's yearly budget. It provides qualified applicants up to \$15,000 a year. In the 1990s, the award was up to \$30,000 annually per scholar.

There are 40 scholars receiving financial assistance under the program of which 12 are ongoing students and will continue to receive the awards until the completion of their courses. It was learned that majority of the recipients of this program are off-island, while about five students are on-island.

## MAIL

From Page 1

held also on the same day.

Zak, vice president for marketing, said Arctic Circle Air is now a subcontractor for United Airlines, which is the direct contractor for the U.S. Postal Services.

An estimated 5,000 lbs of mail were picked up and delivered on the first day, facilitating the big shipment of mail coming in and have been backlogged for three days due to the high volume of mail during the holidays, said Zak.

Pellegrino, president and chairman for Arctic Circle Air, revealed how the company was invited last month to do a presentation at the Hilton Guam to an audience comprised of representatives from both USPS and United Airlines.

He said Leo Tudela of USPS in Hawaii recommended that the contract be given to Arctic Circle Air after touring the company's facility. Arctic Circle Air then got a 60-day cancellation contract which could be terminated depending on its performance.

Zak, during his presentation to the

## FAMILY

From Page 1

He also admitted that the family believes the children are already dead.

"They are not. I'm sorry to say that," Quitugua said when asked if he believes the sisters are still alive.

Then 10-year-old Faloma and 9-year-old Maleina were reportedly last seen near a bus stop pavilion in As Teo on May 25, 2011.

For several months, the most extensive searches in the CNMI history

were conducted to locate the girls as FBI special agents and DPS officers conducted searches at a landfill, caves, jungles, beaches, cliff lines, underwater, villages, abandoned houses, and other areas. Many volunteers, including a tracking expert dog from Hawaii, joined in some of those searches. The military even joined in aerial searches.

Despite a \$50,000 cash reward put up for information on the whereabouts of the Luhk sisters, authorities still failed to find them. No one has been arrested yet.

## Man'amko welcome Mt. Carmel carolers

About 100 students from Mount Carmel School brought festive cheers to the congregates at the Aging Center last Thursday as they sang yuletide carols to get the seniors in the spirit of Christmas.

Accompanied by teachers and school officials, Knights from four different grade lev-

els donned their Christmas costumes and serenaded the *man'amko* with joyful classics that remind everyone about the true spirit of the holidays.

The young performers, some of whom have grandparents among their audiences, came with Mount Carmel School's very own marching

band, giving their presentation a gleeful beat.

"This is the biggest group we've ever brought," said school president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, adding that the student participants were asked not to use any kind of recorded music during their performance.

"What took place was the students' talent. They were so talented. It was all live and we're

very, very proud of these students," he said in an interview.

Deleon Guerrero said one of their performances was one song sung in English, Chamorro, Tagalog, and in sign language in an effort to bring everybody together this Christmas.

He also said it was an honor to perform for the *man'amko* who have been active as performers

themselves under the leadership of program coordinator Walter Manglona.

"It felt like it was very fitting and we're really happy that they enjoyed the performances," added Deleon Guerrero.

Saipan Seniors Advisory Council president Maria Salinas applauded the Knights for their great presentation which the island's elderly appreciated.

"They were really good. I hope they continue performing and perhaps compete in the mainland," said Salinas.

Deleon Guerrero added that the students' performance at the Aging Center was a prelude to their special annual Christmas program, which they've been hosting for 60 years. The program was held at their campus last Friday. *(Clarissa V. David)*

## Appliance center burglar gets 1-year jail term

Superior Court associate judge Joseph Camacho imposed a one-year jail sentence on Marvin Tewid, who was found guilty in the burglary of Pacific Home Appliances.

In a three-page order, Camacho sentenced the 41-year-old defendant to the full maximum of one year imprisonment to be served day for day, without the possibility of parole, early release, weekend release or any other similar program with credit for the three months and 23 days time served.

The order was issued after the defendant entered a guilty plea to the offense of theft as charged in Count I in violation of 6 CMC 1601(a) on Dec. 20 with counsel assistant public defender Matthew Myers. The government was represented in the case by assistant attorney general Chemere K. McField.

According to Camacho, the court accepted the plea of guilty after it found that the defendant's decision to plead guilty is freely, voluntarily, and intelligently made. He has had also the advice

of competent counsel whom the defendant said he was satisfied with. Additionally, Camacho said the court found that the defendant understood the consequences of his plea and there is a factual basis for the guilty plea.

Camacho ordered that upon release from custody, the defendant shall be placed on probation for a period of two years and would follow all terms and conditions imposed by the Office of Adult Probation. The defendant shall also be subjected to random alcohol and/or drug screenings throughout the duration of the probationary period.

Tewid was also ordered to pay full restitution to the burglarized establishment for any damaged or lost property in an amount to be determined within the 90 days after the guilty plea.

The defendant was also ordered to render 150 hours of community service on Saipan and shall submit to an evaluation by Community Guidance Center or an alternate program recommended by the Office of Adult Probation. *(Moneth G. Deposa)*



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## SNILD fails anew to vote on land compensation claim

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_deltorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Eighty-year-old Luisa Borja Quitugua has to wait for next year to see if the Saipan and

Northern Islands Legislative Delegation has the numbers to pass a local bill that would appropriate \$200,344 for various projects, including \$76,144 for partial payment to her for land

compensation.

SNILD chaired by Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb (IR-Saipan) adjourned its special session on Monday after failing to have 16 Saipan lawmakers in order to have a quorum to muster a vote for the passage of House Local Bill 17-89, D2.

As only 14 lawmakers appeared, Tebuteb decided to adjourn the session at 10:20am. The session started at 9:45am. Tebuteb set the next session between Jan. 7 to 11, 2013.

The purpose of the special session was only to entertain HLB 17-89, which was introduced by Rep. Ray Basa (Covenant-Saipan).

Rep. Ray N. Yumul (IR-Saipan), who failed to attend Friday's SNILD session, did not show up again. Vice speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (R-Saipan) came, but Rep. Joseph M. Palacios (R-Saipan) was off-island for medical reasons involving his father.

Also absent were Sen. Luis Crisostimo (R-Saipan), Rep. Froilan Tenorio (Covenant-Saipan), Rep. Frederick Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), Rep. Janet Maratita (IR-Saipan), and Sylvester Iguel (R-Saipan).

Last Thursday, 16 lawmakers attended the session, but did not vote for the passage of the legislation and instead set

another session the following day, Friday.

SNILD's non-action that day caused landowner Quitugua to

cry. Mrs. Quitugua has been seeking \$77,179 in court judgment, plus accrued interest, due to her. Recently, the government

finally paid her \$10,000 as partial payment.

On Friday, only 14 lawmakers showed up.

## Interns from Japan, Korea complete English course

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**  
clarissa\_david@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Twelve student interns from Japan and Korea recently completed the English Language Development Course during their internship training at Saipan World Resort.

Michael Babauta, the resort's public relations officer and local sales manager, said the interns took part in the training program conducted from Oct. 1 to Nov. 23.

Babauta said the program

was in collaboration with the Community Development Institute at the Northern Marianas College.

A "Completion Ceremony" was held on Nov. 28 to mark the culmination of the program attended by CDI director Floyd Masga, instructor Monica Manalo, and Saipan World Resort executives Jong Tae Park, Jake Park, and Marian Seman.

Babauta said in an interview that Saipan World Resort hosts every year university students from Japan, Korea, and Russia.

"What Saipan World Resort does is we work with NMC and take advantage of the training program they have through CDI," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Babauta said they usually conduct the program at the last quarter of the year, with another batch of interns comprised of four Russian students expected to complete the training this month.

He said CDI thanked Saipan World Resort for partnering with them, encouraging other hotels to avail of the training program as well.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Japanese and Korean interns who completed their training program at Saipan World Resort pose with resort executives and Northern Marianas College-Community Development Institute officials during a completion ceremony on Nov. 28.

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# 'Fitial should recuse himself from Buckingham extradition'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Incoming House Speaker Joe Deleon Guerrero (IR-Saipan) said for conflict of interest, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial should recuse himself from deciding the extradition of former attorney general Edward T. Buckingham.

Deleon Guerrero in an interview on Friday said because Fitial is conflicted, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos should make the decision on the recommendation to extradite Buckingham.

Deleon Guerrero said another option is just to have the Office of the Public Auditor decide considering that OPA has been delegated to make the justification to Fitial for

the extradition.

"It's just a justification. The decision still rests with the governor. Maybe the governor should recuse himself from making that decision and let somebody else decide," the lawmaker said.

Fitial reportedly made several phone calls to Buckingham shortly after the former AG left the CNMI on the morning of Aug. 4, 2012.

Buckingham's departure came a day after he and Fitial signed a no-bid, \$190-million diesel power purchase agreement with the Delaware-based Saipan Development LLC.

Attorney General Joey Patrick San Nicolas designated OPA legal counsel George Hasselback

as special prosecutor to assess the criminal charges against Buckingham and determine whether the interests of justice requires the latter's extradition to the CNMI.

San Nicolas asked Hasselback to prepare analysis and recommendation to be submitted to Fitial by no later than Jan. 10, 2013.

OPA filed seven criminal misdemeanor charges against Buckingham.

The five charges were in connection with Buckingham's alleged hosting of a delegate candidate's party at Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's house in August 2010 and Buckingham's approval of a \$400,000 sole-source American Re-

covery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) management contract award in October 2010 to Michael Ada within days of stepping down as a Cabinet

secretary.

The two charges—obstructing justice: interference with service of process, and misconduct in public office—were related to

Buckingham's alleged use of police officers to escort him at the airport to avoid being served with penal summons between Aug. 3 and 4.

## Hofschneider: Incoming Senate will continue implementing drug tests

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Senate Vice President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) said last week that the incoming Senate will implement the outstanding rules for senators and staff to undergo drug tests.

**AGIU agents arrest suspect in largest haul of smuggled cigarettes**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Attorney General's Investigation Unit investigators arrested on Thursday a man who allegedly tried to smuggle 4,000 cartons of undeclared cigarettes shipped from the Philippines.

Jeon Soo Woan, also known as Jun, was taken to Superior Court on Friday on charges of importation of contraband and conspiracy.

Associate judge Joseph N. Camacho imposed a \$50,000 cash bail on Woan.

Camacho appointed the Public Defender's Office to represent the defendant.

According to the Office of the Attorney General, IGIU investigators are still searching for the second suspect, Choo Hee Jong, for his participation in the crimes.

OAG said the arrest of Woan came after CNMI Customs agents intercepted on Feb. 14, 2012 over 4,000 cartons of undeclared Marlboro and Philip Morris brand cigarettes. The items were reportedly consigned to a wholesaler on Saipan.

The undeclared cigarettes were allegedly hidden beneath bags of chips in boxes packed into a 20-foot container.

It was reportedly the largest smuggled cigarette haul in recent CNMI history.

"We have the Senate rules right now that you have to take the drug tests for the senators and the staff. It's the rules," Hofschneider told the media.

Hofschneider, who will be the president of the 18th Senate in January, said he believes that they have been doing the drug tests since the 16th Legislature.

The U.S. Attorney's Office alleged that they have information that Sen. Juan M. Ayuyu (R-Rota) has been using illegal drugs the past four months.

Federal agents arrested Ayuyu last week after new charges were filed against him in district court for obstruction of justice, tampering with witnesses, and

attempting to destroy evidence related to his first case—attempting to smuggle federally protected Mariana fruit bats.

Hofschneider said he wants to refrain from commenting on Ayuyu's case because that's under judicial process.

Asked about how the Senate will deal with the inauguration in January since Ayuyu is still in jail, Hofschneider said as additional charges were filed, the Senate will definitely conduct further discussion on the matter.

"We will be coming up with an official release as far as how we are going to address this matter. This is something that took place in the last couple of days," he said.

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# Kilili: IRS made the right decision on FICA

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) issued the following statement, following the announcement by the Internal Revenue Service regarding FICA taxes on wages paid to residents of the Philippines, working in the Northern Mariana Islands:

"The IRS has done exactly what we asked, setting a specific date, December 31, 2014, after which employers must withhold and pay FICA taxes for most Filipino workers in the Northern Mariana Islands.

"We asked that the IRS take into consideration the continuing uncertainty of workers and their employers about workers' immigration status. We asked that the IRS consider congressional intent in the Consoli-

dated Natural Resources Act to minimize adverse economic impacts arising from federal management of immigration. We asked that the IRS set a date certain when Filipino workers and their employers would be subject to FICA taxation.

"All of these requests are contained in my letter to Deputy Assistant Secretary Emily McMahon last January and were the subject of numerous meetings, phone calls, and other communications with IRS and other Administration officials, beginning in 2011.

"I believe the IRS has now

finally made the right decision in response to these recommendations.

"I remain concerned, however, that as long as employers do not have to pay FICA taxes for Filipino workers, but do have to pay FICA taxes for U.S. workers, there is a disincentive to hire U.S. workers.

"For that reason I am strongly supportive of the recent statements by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service that any employer, seeking to obtain CW status for their foreign employees, who falsely attests that U.S. workers are not

available to work, will face severe penalties.

"It has always been my goal to make the transition to federal immigration as least difficult as possible. The Consolidated Natural Resources Act was already the law when I was first elected to Congress; but I have worked to see it implemented in a way that balances the interests of everyone affected. I have worked to build cooperative and understanding relationships among those responsible for the law's implementation.

"[This] announcement by the IRS strikes a fair balance, I believe, and demonstrates again that cooperation and communication can produce beneficial results for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands." (PR)



Sablan

## NMC spring 2013 admission application deadline on January 2

New students who are interested in enrolling for the Northern Marianas College's Spring 2013 semester must submit their application for admission no later than Jan. 2, 2013. *(The college earlier announced that the deadline to submit applications for the Spring 2013 semester was Jan. 9, 2013, which is incorrect. The college apologizes for this error.)*

Applications for admission and other forms may be picked up at NMC's Office of Admissions & Records located in Building N at the NMC As Terlaje campus, or may be downloaded from [www.nmcnet.edu](http://www.nmcnet.edu).

Note that supporting documents (i.e. transcripts from institutions previously attended, health evaluation form, and copy of a valid photo I.D.)

must also be turned in within 60 calendar days of submitting the admission application. Application forms submitted after the deadline will be processed for the following semester, Summer 2013.

New students and returning students (did not take courses at NMC in the Fall 2012 semester or Intersession Term) are required to attend a student orientation in order to register for courses. If you are unable to attend either session listed in the calendar below, contact the Office of Student Activities and Leadership at 234-5498 ext. 1253. Note the important dates below:

### Spring 2013 Important Dates

■ Jan. 2: Deadline to Submit NMC Admission Application (9am-4pm)

■ Jan. 2: Deadline for Spring 2013 Graduation Candidates to Petition to Graduate

■ Jan. 2: New & Returning Student Orientation in Room D-1 (9am-12pm)

■ Jan. 3: Deadline to Apply for Entry into the NMC Nursing Spring 2013 Cohort

■ Jan. 7: International Student Orientation at the NMC Student Center (9:30am-12:30pm)

■ Jan. 9: New & Returning Student Orientation in Room D-1 (4pm-7pm)

■ Jan. 10: New & Returning Student Orientation in Room S-1 (4pm-7pm)

■ Jan. 14-18: NMC Spring 2013 Registration Week (9am-6pm)

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, in-

cluding a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis on elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), associate degrees in business, business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

For additional information or inquiries, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at 234-5498 ext. 1524 or visit [www.nmcnet.edu](http://www.nmcnet.edu). (NMC)

## RHI celebrates Christmas

ROTA—Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High school (RHI) celebrated Christmas last Friday with performances from its 7th through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The event was the Christmas edition of the renowned school talent show, "RHI's Got Talent".

"I think this was a very successful event, all the students sure did have a very merry time," a junior at RHI said. "The dances and songs definitely brought a lot of Christmas spirit to our school," she added.

A senior at RHI who served as the Mistress of Ceremony during the event, thanked the school's principal for allowing them to have the Christmas program. Before the performances took place, each class displayed their respective Christmas banner on stage. The banners were judged by Board of Education vice chair Denise Tanya King and other PSS faculty and staff.

The banners were judged based on attractiveness, clarity, and relevance to Christmas, including originality. The sophomore class won first place. The 7th grade class won

second. The third place spot was deadlocked as both the junior and senior class had an equal amount of points for the banner competition.

Students then danced and sang along to a variety of Christmas songs, like "Last Christmas" and "Jingle Bell Rock". The performances took a total of two hours as special dance numbers were presented by the school's JROTC Buck Battalion and freshman class.

"This was a great way to end the day and begin Christmas break," a freshman student said.

Sharlene Manglona, RHI's principal, said that the Christmas program was "[t]he most wonderful school Christmas event she has ever attended." She further added that she is looking forward to the future Christmas events to come. The RHI principal then recognized the hard work and dedication students had in such a short amount of time to prepare for the program and in closing she emphasized the students' profound ability to work together and of the importance of teamwork. (Thomas Manglona II)

## Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 26, 2002

### Land woes delay direct port calls

The Commonwealth Ports Authority disclosed yesterday that unresolved talks with the Marianas Public Lands Authority on the acquisition of public lands for the expansion of the Saipan seaport operation has affected the CSX Lines' direct port call plans to the Northern Marianas. This was further compounded by the recent super-typhoon that struck Rota and Guam and the West Coast port lockout incidents, CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas said. In an interview, Salas explained that the scheduled test run of the CSX Lines was pushed back due to subsequent problems that beset the Saipan seaport. He said no definite dates yet were set by the CPA and the shipping company. "We have yet to discuss again when the test run would be or when should we go back to negotiations," the executive director added.

### CUC to study privatization plan

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. aims to conduct a feasibility study on its possible privatization following suggestions from some groups, including the Governor's Office. "This issue has been brought to table. We want to do a feasibility study to make sure that we're heading in the right direction and not just jumping at any option," CUC Executive Director Lorraine A. Babauta said. Babauta said the study has not officially begun but noted that "it's something we're taking very seriously." CUC power manager Andy Balajadia said the CUC needs to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of privatization. "There are examples of successful companies that are publicly owned as well as privately owned. There are both good and bad sides."

Dec. 26, 2003

### DOI okays wetland study for Kagman

The Department of the Interior has approved the conduct of a value engineering study to see if a wetland type of wastewater treatment is cost-efficient compared with the current design method involved in the \$25 million Kagman wastewater treatment project. DOI grants manager Thomas Busanich, in a recent letter to CNMI capital improvement project administrator Vicky Villagomez, said it would be wise to explore such study if it promises significant savings. "If significant savings are possible using an alternative design approach, it would be a mistake to not explore those possibilities," he said.

### PSS seeks \$44.8M budget for 2005

The Public School System is asking the Legislature for a \$44.8-million budget for fiscal year 2005. "That's the figure that we're discussing for the next school year," said Board of Education chairman Herman T. Guerrero. The amount is \$7 million more than the School System's present budget of \$37.2 million. The PSS currently operates on a continuing resolution due to the administration's veto of the Legislature-approved \$213-million budget for 2004. This, even as the BOE asked House Speaker Heinz Hofschneider to keep its funding level at \$39.7 million for the current fiscal year. This level excludes a \$1 million additional appropriation for the purchase of 10 school buses for PSS.

Dec. 26, 2004

### Legislature amends Notaries Act

Citing outdated, inconsistent, and unenforceable provisions in the law, the Legislature has approved a proposal amending the Notaries Public Act. The Legislature, in House Bill 14-135, said that the Notaries Public Act was originally enacted during the Trust Territory period and has not been revised since. "As a result, many of the provisions are out of date with the current needs of the Commonwealth," it said. For instance, the Act sets the fees notaries may charge for their services, but these fees have never been raised "and now are insufficient to cover the cost of performing notarial services and complying with the Act."

### Legislature funds governor's education initiative for 2005

The Legislature has agreed to continue the Governor's Education Initiative, allotting \$600,000 for it under the 2005 budget bill. Legislative conference committee co-chair Sen. Joseph Mendiola said both chambers supported funding the initiative because it is "an effective program." "[The] education initiative is being implemented in other states. It's proven to be an effective type of motivation for both teachers and students," said Mendiola. The Babauta administration began to implement the initiative last year, identifying some \$840,000 in grants that teachers, principals, and students can compete for.

## Red Cross releases Blended Learning

In an effort to meet virtual training demands, the American Red Cross has developed Blended Learning, a delivery method which incorporates online training with in-person skills sessions with a certified ARC instructor in first aid, CPR, and automated external defibrillator (AED) usage.

"This will allow us to reach a new audience who normally would not take our training due to time conflicts," said Kennedy Benjamin, ARC's service delivery manager for Health & Safety. "They can do the majority of their training anytime and anywhere with a computer and Internet access."

After registering for a Blended Learning course, participants will need to successfully complete the online session, before attending the in-person skills session, Benjamin said. The interactive web-based program is designed to teach participants the skills required to pass the in-person skill session.

"Students can spend anywhere from 2-5 hours doing

the online training, depending on which course they register for," Benjamin said. "And it does not have to be done all at once."

The virtual training tracks and stores students' progress in the specific course. Students are able to resume the course from where they last left off.

Every module has a pre-test to determine a student's competency. If a student answers all the questions correctly, they are able to skip that module and move on to the next one. Students must pass the assessment at the end of the online session in order to move on to the in-person session.

"Our goal is to have as many people prepared for and able to respond to emergencies," said John Hirsh, executive director for the NMI Chapter. "In order to do this our community needs to be trained in these life-saving skills" said Hirsh.

For more information about this program or other Health & Safety training, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or contact the local chapter at 234-3459. (ARC)

# PSS honors retiring SSHS principal

The CNMI Board of Education and the Public School System last week honored Saipan Southern High School principal Jessie M. Tudela, who after 11 years working for the school district, is retiring on Dec. 28.

Tudela, 35, has been at the helm of SSHS since 2010 as its principal.

"It is something that I have been contemplating already not (so long ago)," Tudela said Thursday in a special ceremony in his honor and were attended by Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D, BOE member Herman T. Guerrero and the PSS leadership team of associate commissioner for instructional services Jackie A. Quitugua, associate commissioner for administrative services Glenn Muna, Human Resource Office interim director Coreen Palacios, and Charley Kentey, equal employment opportunity officer.

"We have a lot of success and challenges as a school. The challenges, I say, also allowed us to do better. And we did," Tudela added.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jessie M. Tudela, outgoing principal of Saipan Southern High School, is flanked by Board of Education member Herman T. Guerrero, Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D, and the Public School System leadership team during last week's special presentation of a service award for Tudela which was held at the Office of the Commissioner of Education in Susupe.

Sablan agrees. "We fall a little bit but we rise up to the level."

Tudela joined the school district in 2001 as a classroom teacher at Marianas High School handling science/biology and health occupation classes.

When Saipan Southern High School opened in 2002, he transferred and taught the same subjects. His dedication into classroom teaching was "rewarding" for him, and three years later he was named vice principal.

It was in 2010 when he was named principal—a fulfillment of his desire to serve the school district.

"It is actually a very rewarding experience. I didn't know that I could climb the ranks that fast, and I thank our dedicated leaders and the PSS leadership, from (the late education commissioner) Rita H. Inos, former commissioner David Borja and our current commissioner Rita A. Sablan for believing in my

abilities," said Tudela, humbled by the service recognition award presented to her by education leaders held at the Office of Education Commissioner at PSS central office yesterday noon.

In hailing the outgoing principal's commitment and dedication to public education, BOE member Guerrero said Tudela has "set the ground work that will be stepping stones for future education leaders."

"We wish that we have more people like you. And please do know that you are always welcome back," jests Guerrero.

Sablan added, "You are going to fulfill that part of your dream (to be in the healthcare profession) and you have done so much for Saipan Southern High School by achieving its goals,

and that, for whoever succeeds you, will continue on. You are leaving a legacy."

Tudela is said to accept a job at the Commonwealth Health Center after being offered months ago. Though he has yet to accept the offer, he described his would-be position as a "working manager" under the respiratory care department of the Department of

Public Health.

"But at this time, I have to spend more time with my family and parents first," Tudela said.

Sablan noted that Tudela's experience is "going to be a great help" in his future career in public health.

The education chief will name vice principal Lyn Mendiola as acting principal on Dec. 28. (PSS)

## Kilili, wife donate to Toys for Tots



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Andrea Sablan, center, is joined by staff at the Office of the CNMI Delegate as she presents the toy donation to Karidat Social Services executive director Angie V. Guerrero and administrative officer Judy Pangelinan during a brief ceremony Thursday in Susupe.

By CLARISSA V. DAVID  
clarissa\_david@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Christmas magic for Karidat Social Services carried on a day after the conclusion of its Toys for Tots program as the agency received more toys donated by Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan and wife Andrea.

Andrea Sablan handed over the toys—which included cars, basketball sets, rattlers, purses, board games, and dolls—to Karidat executive director Angie V. Guerrero and administrative officer Judy Pangelinan in a brief presentation yesterday at the Office of the CNMI Delegate in Susupe.

The congressman was not able to make it since he is still attending session at the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C., and Andrea Sablan said her husband will hopefully be home in time for the holidays.

With their donation, Andrea Sablan expressed hope that many children in the CNMI will be happy this Christmas.

"The economy may not be doing good but we're still blessed and we just have to share it. Christmas is about the children and it's the time of sharing. It may only be just a small thing,

but once you see the smiles on their faces, that really touches me," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

For her part, Guerrero said the Sablan couple's donation is very much appreciated and a welcome addition to the toys they already collected through the Toys for Tots program.

Guerrero revealed that as of 11am on Thursday, 115 names of children already have been compiled and the list continues to expand as more parents continue to call and ask for gifts for their children. Even St. Jude Parish also requested for toys to be distributed to less fortunate youth in the village, she said.

"We'll spare whatever we can because we don't want to store any toys," added Guerrero.

The executive director said that they also received yesterday monetary donation from Toothworks, which would be added to the check given by Handbags, etc.

The money, Guerrero said, will be used to purchase appropriate toys for children whose ages were not considered during the just-concluded toy drive.

She added that if the toys could not be distributed in time for Christmas, then they will be given before Three Kings or the first Sunday of January 2013, which is Jan. 6.

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CEO – COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORP.

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN  
DIRECTOR, P&S

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Office of the Secretary of Public Works**  
2nd Floor Forten Commercial Building, Chuao Rai, Saipan, MP 96950

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
DPW13-RFP-001**

**MARPI LANDFILL OPERATIONS**

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Acting Secretary of Public Works, are soliciting sealed proposals from qualified companies or individuals for the **Marpi Landfill Operations**, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This procurement is made in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, under Article 7, "Local Business Preference," as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with **§ 70-30.3-210** (competitive sealed proposals) of the Procurement Regulations.

The Scope of Work will be available on or after **December 12, 2012** at the Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Refuse Transfer Station, Saipan, MP 96950. A mandatory Pre-proposal Conference is scheduled for 9:30 a.m., local time, at the Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Refuse Transfer Station on **January 2, 2013**. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Alex S. Chong, Director of Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Refuse Transfer Station, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 322-2762 no later than 4:00 p.m. local time **January 16, 2013**.

Proposals must be sealed and marked **"DPW13-RFP-001"**. For proposers within the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of sealed proposal must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than 10:00 a.m., local time, **January 22, 2013**.

Proposers located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a **Notice of Intent to Propose**. Notices of Intent to submit proposals must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m., local time, **January 22, 2013**, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or via email to [procurement@pticom.com](mailto:procurement@pticom.com). For proposers located outside the CNMI, one original and five (5) copies of sealed proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **January 22, 2013** and must be received no later than **January 31, 2013**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of proposal. Submitted proposals are to be valid for 180-days from date of Submission Deadline. Selected contractor will be allowed not more than 120-days prior to contract performance for delivery of the required equipments. Liquidated damages will be assessed at Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per calendar day for delays beyond the delivery of the required equipments.

Discussions shall be conducted with at least three (3) of the responsible proposers who submit proposals determined to be most reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purposes of clarification and to insure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, solicitation requirements. A fee shall be negotiated with the highest qualified firm at a price determined to be fair and reasonable to the Government under their sole discretion. If a fair and reasonable price cannot be negotiated with the highest ranking qualified firm, then another firm may be selected in the order of competence and qualifications and negotiations continued until a fair and reasonable price acceptable to the Commonwealth is agreed upon.

All response to this RFP shall take into account payment of all associated tax liabilities. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal in the best interest of the Government. All proposals shall become the property of the Government.

**Evaluation Factors**  
Factors that will be used in the evaluation of proposals are the proposed operational plan and company background and qualification. The value assigned to these evaluation factors are as follows:

1. Background and Qualification	40%
2. Operational Plan	60%

The successful proposer will be subject to a responsibility determination in compliance with §70-30.3-245 of the CNMI Procurement Regulations and will be required to submit additional information as required by the Commonwealth. Responsibility determination will include, but not limited to, ability of proposer to obtain required insurance; financing; experience. Additionally, proposals must comply with submission of information required regarding company background and qualification, and operational plan in the identified format. These requirements are identified below.

**Background and Qualification**  
Proposers must submit company background and qualification detailing the proponents experience that are directly or somehow related to the proposed landfill operations specified in this scope of work.

Submitted Background and Qualification should be no longer than 5 pages (typed) in length.

**Operational Plan**  
Proposers must submit a brief description of their proposed plan for meeting the requirements of the Scope of Work. Contents of the submitted operational plan must provide sufficient detail to convey an understanding of the scope of work requirements; how these requirements will be met; and inclusion of detailed information concerning the associated costs as presented in the proposal. Separate examination and costing should be provided for the following areas of the Scope of Work:

- Equipment;
- Insurance;
- Training;
- Site Access;
- Waste Disposal;
- Daily and Intermediate Cover;
- Surface Water Control;
- Site Personnel;
- Leachate Management and Monitoring; and
- Operation of Vegetated Submerged Bed

The submitted Operational Plan should be no longer than 10 pages (typed) in length.

/s/ VICENTE B. CASTRO  
Acting Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN  
Director of Procurement & Supply

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER  
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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI  
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR  
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

### EDITORIAL

## The world didn't end — yet

If you are reading this, then the world did not end Friday, as some thought it might. And chances are pretty good that the planet was not visited by a cataclysmic—pick one—earthquake, tsunami or volcanic eruption.

So much for another wacky end-of-the-world theory. The hypothesis that the world would be destroyed at the end of the 13th baktun cycle in the Maya calendar (which corresponds pretty closely with Dec. 21) was just plain wrong.

Nor, come to think of it, was the last much-publicized prophet of doom on target. That was Harold Camping, the Christian radio announcer who predicted that the rapture (and end of the world) would come on May 21, 2011. When that didn't happen, he recalibrated the date as Oct. 21, 2011. He has since given up predicting disasters.

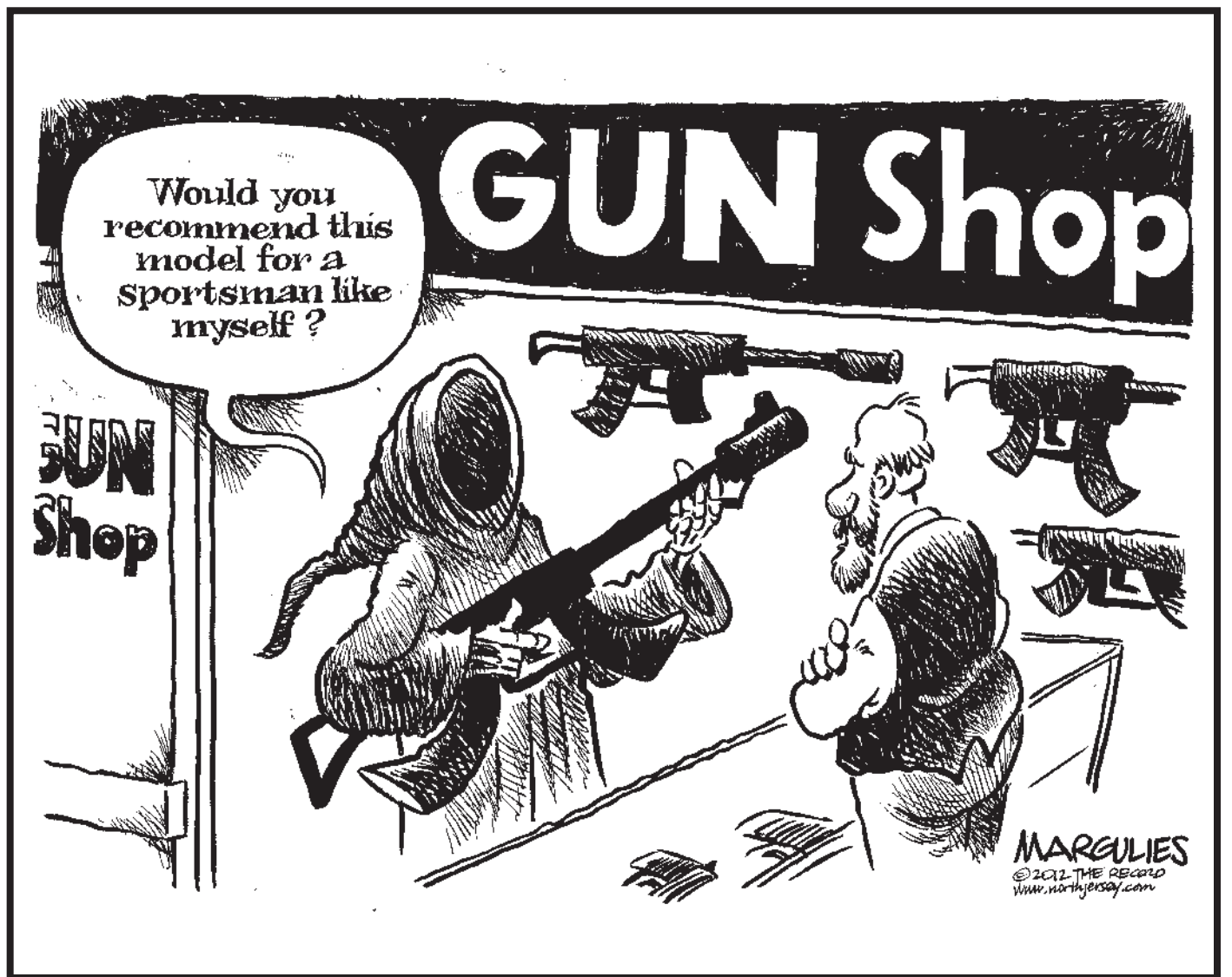
Humans have always been fascinated by the idea of the apocalypse. Sometimes we actually seem to believe in it; other times we're just lapping up fantasies about dramatic destruction. In the 1999 doomsday action movie "End of Days," for instance, the devil comes to Earth to claim his mortal bride and dominance over the world. But Arnold Schwarzenegger ends up (spoiler alert!) saving her—and the world—by impaling himself on a sword in a lofty Catholic cathedral that had begun to crumble around him.

What's odd is that despite our apparent obsession with global catastrophe, we're surprisingly reluctant to confront the complications of actual, documented threats to our planet. Science and observation seem to indicate that real planetary crises will come more quietly and slowly but just as sadly—and perhaps more so because by that time we will have had years, if not decades, of legitimate warning. The effects of climate change may not be as dramatic as the reappearance of Satan on Earth, but they are a lot more imminent. Scientists around the planet have urged political leaders to counter the threat with a variety of conservation measures, some of which we have pursued, some of which we've ignored. Meanwhile, global temperatures are already up, ice masses are melting, polar bears are being stranded on diminishing frozen habitats.

Nuclear annihilation, which would happen a lot faster and with a more cinematic bang, continues to be a possibility as more countries seek nuclear weapons or the material to make them. Reining in nuclear proliferation—and controlling those weapons that already exist—is complicated and controversial but surely worth fighting for.

It may be more fun to consider theatrical endgames and far-fetched predictions of doom, but really, shouldn't we be concentrating instead on resolving the complex but scarily real scenarios facing us? At least then, Earthlings might stand a chance of surviving.

© Los Angeles Times, 2012



## Moment to act against guns

On the same day 27 women and children were massacred in Newtown, Conn., a man stabbed 22 children at a school in China. The Chinese children all survived.

So much for the infamous National Rifle Association claim that "Guns don't kill, people do." Obviously, a wacko with a semiautomatic rifle is a far more effective killing machine than someone with a knife.

But the Chinese tale contains another important message. Beijing government media gave massive coverage to the Newtown murders while blocking all reporting of the school attack in Henan province. This was in keeping with Chinese government policy, which tries to hide details of all such disasters.

This time, however, Chinese social media denounced their government's blind eye toward Henan, as compared with the intense U.S. focus on the Sandy Hook school killings. As the Chinese bloggers noted, Americans know every detail when there is a massacre—of children or adults.

Indeed, we know the detailed bios and photos of each of Newtown's victims. We also know about Congress' failure in 2004 to extend a ban of the kind of automatic weapon that killed these first graders. Given what we know—about this and a string of mass-shooting murders in the last five years—we have no excuses if we fail to take action, this time, on gun reforms.

We know that the gun debate is not about the Second Amendment, which protects the right of individuals to bear arms. Ordinary people don't need military-grade weapons like the AR-15 Bushmaster used by the Newtown killer. As Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., a strong supporter of gun rights, put it: "I don't know anyone in the sporting or hunting arena that goes out with an assault rifle."

We know that the reduction of gun restrictions across the country has veered into the absurd, and that it has become entwined with Republican political identity. The Republican-held legislature in Ohio, which last year made it legal to carry firearms into bars, passed a bill last week to permit guns in cars in the Statehouse garage. Has partisanship grown so sharp that Ohio Republicans think they need armed protection against Democrats in the halls of power?

Meantime, the day before the Newtown shootings, the Republican-held Michigan legislature passed a bill permitting people to carry concealed weapons into schools and churches. Only after the Sandy Hook massacre did Republican Gov. Rick Snyder decide to veto the measure. Do Michigan residents really need to pack heat when they attend Christmas services? Do Michigan legislators really think the way to protect children is for teachers

By **TRUDY RUBIN**  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to her at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by e-mail at [trubin@phillynews.com](mailto:trubin@phillynews.com).



to play John Wayne?

We know that America's obsession with guns is unique in the world. With 270 million privately held firearms—an average of roughly nine guns for every 10 Americans—we have the highest gun ownership per capita in the world by far.

According to statistics of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Americans have nearly twice as many guns per person as Yemen (number two) and 2 { times as many as Iraq (number five). Yes, Yemen and Iraq, countries torn by tribal and sectarian violence, where families need guns for their very survival—and where affiliates of al-Qaida still have a foothold.

We know that it is possible in America to change ingrained cultural habits when the public comes to believe those habits are harmful. Who imagined, decades ago, that smokers would become so isolated? That drunken drivers would be punished?

The Sandy Hook massacre could mark the moment when Americans come to regard assault weapons and large-capacity magazines with fear and loathing. That happened in rough-and-ready Australia, after the 1996 Port Arthur massacre, when one shooter slaughtered 35 tourists with semiautomatic weapons. Shortly afterward, the Australian government banned most semiautomatic rifles and bought back hundreds of thousands of others.

We know that no lobbying group, even the NRA, is impervious to pressure. Already, some gun enthusiasts in Congress are rethinking their support for any and all weapons. If the NRA wants to target these legislators, every concerned parent, along with rich gun-control supporters like New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, should make clear they will offset such efforts. Perhaps the parents of some Sandy Hook victims will join that campaign.

We know there is no one measure that will curb the horrific gun violence in America. But we also know that, if the deaths of 20 little kids and their teachers is to mean anything, this is the moment for action, by rational citizens and by the White House.

Unlike in China, we know what's happening, and we have a system that lets us bring about change.

**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## The Chairman at the City center

We were booked Dec. 24 on a train ride from Shenyang, Liaoning to Changsha in Hunan Province, home of the erstwhile Chairman of China's 1940s revolution, but our exit and entry stamp derailed our departure when we discovered that the open space in our passport had ran out of clean slates for the new visa to be recorded. We have facsimiles of the blue document but colleagues strongly recommended that we did not travel without the actual passport in our possession. We trudged to Shenyang USCG to await a lengthy processing.

It is just as well. When the winter solstice failed to give flesh to the mistaken catastrophe that media-read into Mesoamerican calendars, and the air generously provided fluffy white stuff descending, Jesus' celebrated birthday got all the jingles it needed, and white became the color of the season's holiday already draped in tinsel and mistletoes, fake snowflakes and striped candy canes. Leave it to Chinese commerce to duplicate Chicago's loop, complete with the evangelicals singing carols at the corner.

Shaoshan, a village 100km south of Changsha is where Mao Zedong was born Dec. 26 one hundred nineteen years ago. It was a destination of choice during the Cultural Revolution. The local merchants took advantage of the guests and paraphernalias of tourism got birthed. Now, a nationwide franchise that stirfries Hunan cuisine goes by the brand of Mao eateries!

We are not exactly in the market for the Chairman's bust but a disestablishment brother in Hawaii might want one on his desk, if only to rile his colleagues in the State government!

Troopers that make it to Shaoshan these days are a third of what it was during the red book waving days, and though the Chairman's image graces the paper renminbi, and his fatherly stare still looks into Beijing Tiananman Square, two among the helmsman finger-

## Destiny: 'Rainbow Shiny'

The shore was immaculate as salty mist sweeps up thin ironwood tree leaves hanging, swaying and whispering softly in the trade winds. As I parked my jeep, there was a young girl smiling as passersby make their way to the beach. She pointed at my jeep and said, "Rainbow Shiny." Perhaps the sunbeam escaping through tree branches must have turned the mist into hues of multi-colored rainbow.

Politely, I stopped by to say hello and asked for her name. She quickly answered, "Destiny," smiling as she looked across the shoreline where young guys were barbecuing meat. She inhaled BBQ smoke and said, "It smells really good, sir. Would you be having any of it for lunch?" I answered in the negative and went along my way. Her mom heard our brief conversation and said, "Destiny enjoys meeting new people".

About 12 feet from the shoreline, my uncle was pulling in his throw net teeming with juvenile fish. He placed them in his five-gallon bucket and filled it halfway full from a single hurl. Two hours later, I decided to head home. On the hood of the car was a plastic bag loaded with fish. My uncle has left and didn't have the chance to say thanks for my noon kelaguen—mashed fish with lemon, salt and pepper—of juicy juvenile fish. "Destiny" and her mom have also left.

On my way home along panoramic beach road, two things kept echoing in my mind: Rainbow Shiny and Destiny. Perhaps my meeting "Destiny" wasn't by accident or her remarks something to brush off like fly by cotton ball. It kept sliding into consciousness. It was a challenge trying to piece together the significance of the moment. It came flowing in slowly.

Her name briefly asserts that you have a certain destiny ahead. Six years ago we were hoping to arrive in the land of honey and milk of fully earned prosperity (destiny) where opportunities abound for our children. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be.

We were Scrooge by new federal policies that derailed any appreciable effort to grow the economy. Coupled by local policies that serve as major deterrents to investment, the combined punitive and destructive policies did a royal job adding salt to injury crash landing the NMI in what's known as "dystopia", meaning, "where nothing works".

Appalling though the disorientation that left this administration reeling for superficial economic resuscitation by simply playing the other side of its CD, "Let It Be". Its lack of concern and negligence forced us into a livelihood of subterranean misery. It simply ignored its fiduciary responsibility on this score as it fought a winless war against impeachment.

Rainbow shiny has morphed into an ugly ghostly contraption de-

prints in China's history are now open to discussions.

These two were the Great Leap Forward maneuver (1959-61) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). The first tried to get China to be agriculturally self-sufficient and also industrially provident with iron and steel from commune backyard furnaces.

An unhelpful drought did not bring the expected farm productivity, and the quality of the iron was not up to par. Many farmhands turned into unaccustomed collectives in the Soviet model, unprepared corporate managers, and unskilled industrial factory workers. The maneuver was a recorded disaster. The West mercilessly dubbed the great leap forward as the great leap famine!

The excesses of the Cultural Revolution resulted in purges. China's post-Qing nationalist movement was rife with warlord rivalries; illuminati discord characterized ideological discourse. Mao's purges of wayward (to him) military personnel and wealth-connected anti-collectivist capitalists in government left a trail of tears from unruly red guards ridiculing the children of Confucius and admirers of things western.

After Deng Xiaoping rectified Mao's excesses, a movement was afoot to totally discredit the Chairman. Zhang Yimou's movie Hero told of an assassin who initially vowed to cut down the ruler of the Qin Shi Huang, but became convinced that the Huangdi's effort to unify China was worth his support. Consequently, the hero willingly faced a battery of arrows and was given a proper State funeral.

The Yimou theme, and China's ideological journey, follows this taiji sense of balance (often misunderstood as harmony in the melting pot sense rather than the rich ingredients of mosaic diversity). The CPC began with the influence of the Marx-Lenin industrial soviets, with Mao leaning on peasants to fuel China's revolution, then Deng Xiaoping's market reform and opening to urban civility, to Jiang Semin's "three represents" (revolution, construction, and

picting layers of vicious hardship the simple folks throughout the villages must weather come hell or high water. This as the administration takes long bomb junkets embracing selective lessons in geography that work is located 30K feet in the air in airplane cabins not downstairs where it must do reality check daily.

But then it must be one quick exit to polishing ignoring fiduciary responsibility it has openly and consistently neglected for six long years. What callous attitude finding money for junkets while ignoring the needs of medical referral patients who can't pay for their airline tickets. How much longer must we put up with failed leadership?

*On my way home along panoramic beach road, two things kept echoing in my mind: Rainbow Shiny and Destiny. Perhaps my meeting "Destiny" wasn't by accident or her remarks something to brush off like fly by cotton ball. It kept sliding into consciousness. It was a challenge trying to piece together the significance of the moment. It came flowing in slowly.*

### Health insurance a must

The most ignored aspect in our daily bouts with expenses is health. We're especially boastful, if not, disdainful (while young and healthy) that we will not be struck with catastrophic or debilitating long-term illnesses. We meet reality check when we're hit with the former. The other reality hits when we enter our golden years.

Believe it or not, health cost gets more expensive as you move into your senior years. It's that time in our lifetime

By **JAIME VERGARA**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Jaime R. Vergara is an ordained minister of the United Methodist Church and was pastor of Saipan Immanuel UMC at the second millenium's turn. He now writes from China.*



reform), and finally, Hu Jintao's scientific outlook—earth friendly and people centered—on development. Now, the Xin Jinping/ Le Keqiang era is about to formally take center stage as President and Premier at the National Peoples Congress in March 2013.

Meanwhile, Chairman Mao iconically presides over many of China's city centers with his arm extended outward while carvings of soldiers, workers, peasants, students, women, youth, and others serve as the foundation of his statue. There is no reason to think Mao's likeness on the Yuan is about to be replaced soon.

Chairman Mao's relationship to Shaoshan of Changsha is like that of ol' blue eyes Frank Sinatra, also dubbed as the Chairman of the Board, to Hoboken, New Jersey. Shaoshan and Hoboken are not exactly David's Jerusalem (claimed by all of Abraham's progeny), or Jesus' Bethlehem, nor the Prophet's Mecca. Shaoshan is a tourist stop that reveals the beginnings of a not so impoverished young boy, son of a farmer who lived in a 13-room house, learned library science, and unified a nation.

My friends will find it sacrilegious that I follow-up my happy birthday Jesus with a happy b-day Mao. Hey, I am a Christian!

By **JOHN DELROSARIO**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

*John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*



when the old system voluntarily begins to break down. You have your medication, medical care and senior care as you engage infirmity due to age. Someone would have to pay for these costs and in this case it's you. Cost per couple over their lifetime? I say upwards of \$150,000 to \$200,000. Even dying automatically kicks-in some \$15K. Add this to your health cost and you'd see it isn't inexpensive.

I bring this issue to your attention given the impending reality you eventually face. I know that a good number of employees have terminated health insurance policies saying it's too expensive, plus they'd never get sick. This is a grave decision and though the premiums may be a bit too high, you should have stuck it out from A-Z. If it isn't too late, go back and purchase a policy now.

Recently, I've seen cases requiring treatment of catastrophic illnesses in off-island hospitals derailed by the lack of health insurance. It gets a bit more complicated when the patient isn't even a Medicaid recipient. Who picks up the expenses? The family? Other taxpayers?

It's often good to listen to the advice of our elderly how important it is to look beyond the tip of our nose. That dreadful rainy day may hit when you least expect it. Clogged arteries require off-island medical attention, including serious illnesses triggered by diabetes reaching chronic level where major organs begin to lose their functions.

Too, there's a stunning increase in type two diabetes, heart problems and cancer. If you don't prepare for it now as a matter of personal responsibility, do you wish to leave behind a huge debt for your spouse and children? Prepare for it now!






■ ■ ■

When catastrophe hits (natural or man-made), we struggle to understand the disorienting event before us. But there's always that lasting consolation I find in my anchor where divine providence prepares me for eventualities ahead. Drop your anchor too lest you become that rudderless boat in dangerous deep blue.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

# The Weather

## 5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲ 88° ▼ 76°	▲ 89° ▼ 76°	▲ 89° ▼ 76°	▲ 89° ▼ 76°	▲ 89° ▼ 76°

### Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 87 ▼ 78
Palau	Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 77
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 88 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 81
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲ 87 ▼ 80

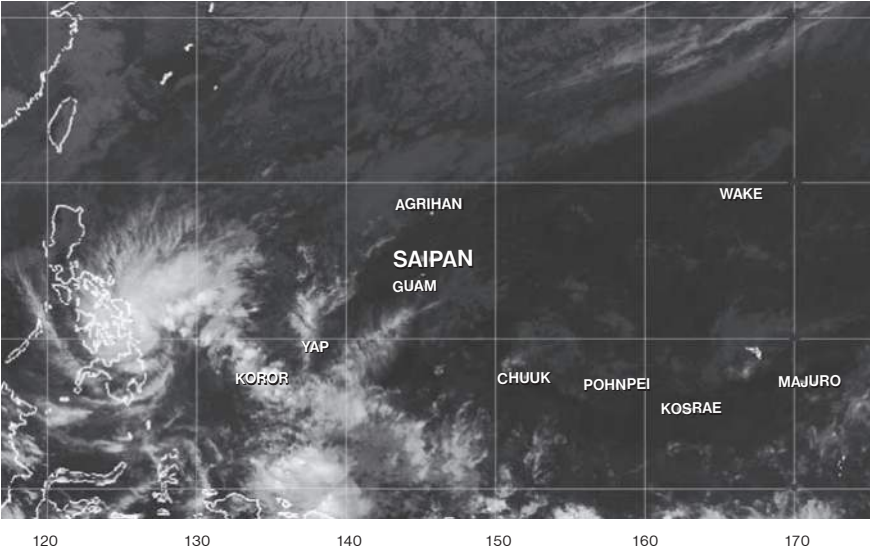
### Around The Globe

Auckland	Rain	▲ 72 ▼ 68
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 21 ▼ 4
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲ 67 ▼ 62
Honolulu	Showers	▲ 78 ▼ 69
London	Rain	▲ 52 ▼ 41
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 63 ▼ 49
Manila	Thundershowers	▲ 83 ▼ 77
Melbourne	Sunny	▲ 73 ▼ 54
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 80 ▼ 69
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲ 41 ▼ 28
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 43 ▼ 33
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 49 ▼ 46
Pusan	Sunny	▲ 36 ▼ 23
Rome	Showers	▲ 59 ▼ 45
Salem	Rain	▲ 48 ▼ 41
San Francisco	Rain	▲ 55 ▼ 50
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲ 20 ▼ 11
Tokyo	Sunny	▲ 46 ▼ 30
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲ 49 ▼ 31

### Tides

Saipan Harbor			
12:29 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
7:39 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
12:42 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
5:31 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

### Yesterday's Satellite Image



### PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2012

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Low-level convergence east of Tropical Depression Wukong centered well northwest of Koror at 10N128E is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms near Koror within 130 miles of a line from 13N130E to 7N136E. A near-equatorial trough extends southeastward from 4N130E to EQ152E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found southwest of Chuuk south of a line from 8N136E to 4N150E. A shear line extends southwestward from east of Minami Tori Shima at 25N160E the Northern Marianas to 13N133E. Cloudiness and patchy showers are found along and up to 350 miles northwest of this feature. Another shear line curves southwestward from 13N180 to 7N166E then turns westward to 8N152E. Cloudiness and patchy showers are located along and up to 120 miles north of this boundary. A surface trough runs northeastward from EQ170E to 11N173E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring east of Majuro between 10N and 3N from 173E to the date line.

### Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:41 AM	5:55 PM
Thursday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Saturday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Sunday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM

### Moonrise/Moonset

Today	4:13 PM	4:36 AM
Thursday	5:01 PM	5:25 AM
Friday	5:51 PM	6:13 AM
Saturday	8:41 PM	7:00 AM
Sunday	7:32 PM	7:44 AM

## GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

### PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

### CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

### REQUIREMENTS

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

#### For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

### HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DEC. 14, 2012

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 4, 6, 7	UA 5069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5062	4:40am	5:30am	1, 3, 5	UA5071	7:05am	7:55am	Daily
UA5068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily	UA5073	9:50am	10:40am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
UA5074	11:10am	12:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7	UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily	UA5077	5:35pm	6:25pm	Daily
UA5078	6:55pm	7:45pm	Daily	UA5079	8:20pm	9:10pm	Daily
UA5072	9:45pm	10:35pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily	DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL297	4:25pm	7:20pm	Daily	DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 6, 7	OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 5, 6
OZ608	3:30am	6:40am	3	OZ607	9:35pm	2:25am+1	2
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1	OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily	OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU7108	4:05am	5:55am	1, 3, 5	MU7107	6:30pm	1:50am+1	2, 4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6	3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-VLADIVOSTOK (VVO)				VLADIVOSTOK (VVO)-SAIPAN			
VLK1734	2:00am	8:15am	5 every other week	VLK1733	8:00pm	12:05am+1	4 every other week
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1	OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM	UA190/5077	10:55am	6:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:00am	10:20pm	Daily via NRT	UA190/5079	10:55am	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA5076/183	3:10pm	9:45pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN	PR110/UA5071	10:10pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:55am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
				UA184/5071	11:59pm	7:55am+1	2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA5076/147	3:10pm	10:30pm	1, 5 via GUM	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN	UA180/5071	11:25pm	10:40am+1	1 via GUM
				UA180/5077	11:25pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air.				ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)			

## FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	Tinian-Saipan			
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
				FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
				FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily



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- \*11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at [www.nmicrimestoppers.com](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.com)

# Business

## Shoppers found bigger sales, smaller crowds

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Shoppers who waited until the final days before Christmas were rewarded with big bargains and lighter crowds. But their last-minute deal hunting may hurt stores.

Although fresh data on the holiday shopping season won't be available until Christmas, analysts expect growth from last year to be modest. Several factors have dampened shoppers' spirits, including fears that the economy could fall off the "fiscal cliff," triggering tax increases and spending cuts early next year.

On Christmas Eve, Taubman Centers, which operates 28 malls across the country, reported a "very strong weekend." But many last-minute shoppers in cities including New York, Atlanta and Indianapolis were spending less than they did last year, and taking advantage of big discounts of up to 70 percent that hurt stores' profits.

Kris Betzold, 40, of Carmel, Ind., was out at the Fashion Mall at Keystone in Indianapolis on Monday looking for deals on toys, and said she's noticed the sales are "even better now than they were at Thanksgiving." She said the economy has



FedEx courier Andrew Standeven makes last minute deliveries to businesses at the CambridgeSide Galleria mall in Cambridge, Mass., Monday, Dec. 24, 2012.

prompted her and her husband to be more frugal this year.

"We under-budgeted ourselves by \$400 for Christmas because we just wanted to put that money back in savings," she said.

Dianne Ashford, 40, was at the Lenox Square Mall in Atlanta on Monday, said she was spending \$500 on gifts this year,

down from the \$1,000 she normally spends.

"Times are hard," said Ashford, who works for a film production company. The best deal she found this year was a guitar for her mother, half off at \$79.

Other last-minute shoppers said they were holding off as much as possible for even bigger post-holiday sales.

Chris Ailes, a 37-year-old TV producer, also was at the Lenox Square on Monday to pick up last-minute gifts for his mom and grandmother. With the economy so shaky, he and his family are trying to cut back on spending. So he said he's looking forward to discounts after Christmas.

"That's when the sales are go-

ing on," he said.

At Macy's in New York, shopper Maureen Whyte had a similar game plan in mind. Whyte, a 33-year-old who works for an insurance company, was picking up last-minute stocking stuffers for her kids. For some toys, however, she was holding off for the post-Christmas sales and her kids understood why.

"I told them, 'Whatever Mommy didn't get you, you'll get after this week,'" she said, noting that her children, ages 5 and 10, are fine waiting as long as they know they'll eventually get their toys.

That's grim news for retailers, which typically get 40 percent of their annual sales in the critical November to December period. Although the week after Christmas is considered part of the season, by that time retailers are backed into a corner since it's their last chance to get rid of items that have been sitting on shelves for months. The steep discounts during that time mean sales are less profitable.

ShopperTrak, which counts foot traffic and its own proprie-

tary sales numbers from 40,000 retail outlets across the country, last Wednesday cut its forecast for holiday spending down to 2.5 percent growth to \$257.7 billion, from prior expectations of a 3.3 percent rise.

Online, sales rose just 8.4 percent to \$48 billion from Oct. 28 through Saturday, according to a measure by MasterCard Advisors' SpendingPulse. That is below the online sales growth of between 15 to 17 percent seen in the prior 18-month period, according to the data service, which tracks all spending across all forms of payment, including cash.

Marshal Cohen, chief research analyst at the market research firm NPD Inc., said retailers will have to be more aggressive than usual with discounts in the days after Christmas to get shoppers to spend. That could mean some stores will slash prices by as much as 80 percent to make shoppers believe the sales are a "once in a lifetime opportunity."

"Consumers are going to be rewarded for waiting until after the holidays," he said.

## Lawmakers see 'fiscal cliff' deal as elusive

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—With anxiety rising as the country lurches towards a "fiscal cliff," lawmakers are increasingly skeptical about a possible deal and some predict the best possibility would be a small-scale patch because time is running out before the yearend deadline.

Sen. Joe Lieberman predicted Sunday: "We're going to spend New Year's Eve here, I believe."

Even those who see the possibility of a deal don't expect a lot.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, said she expects "it is going to be a patch because in four days we can't solve everything."

With the collapse Thursday of House Speaker John Boehner's plan to allow tax rates to rise on million-dollar-plus incomes, Lieberman said: "It's the first time that I feel it's more likely we'll go over the cliff than not," meaning that higher taxes for most Americans and painful federal agen-

cy budget cuts would be in line to go ahead.

"If we allow that to happen it will be the most colossal consequential act of congressional irresponsibility in a long time, maybe ever in American history because of the impact it'll have on almost every American," said Lieberman, a Connecticut independent.

Wyoming Sen. Jon Barrasso, a member of the GOP leadership, predicted the new year would come without an agreement, and he faulted the White House.

"I believe the president is eager to go over the cliff for political purposes. He senses a victory at the bottom of the cliff," he said.

Democratic Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, was incredulous at Barrasso's assertion that "there is only one person that can provide the leadership" on such a matter vi-

tal to the nation's interests.

"There are 535 of us that can provide leadership. There are 435 in the House, 100 in the Senate and there is the president, all of us have a responsibility here," he said. "And, you know what is happening? What is happening is the same old tired blame game. He said/she said. I think the American people are tired of it. What they want to hear is 'What is the solution?'"

President Barack Obama and Congress are on a short holiday break. Congress is expected to be back at work Thursday and Obama will be back in the White House after a few days in Hawaii.

"It is time to get back to the table," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., "And I hope if anyone sees these representatives from the House in line shopping or getting their Christmas turkey, they wish them a merry Christmas, they're civil, and then say 'go back to the table, not your own table, the

table in Washington.'"

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., said he expects something will be passed, but nothing that will solve the nation's growing financial problems.

"I think there's unfortunately only going to be a small deal," he said, but added "it's critical we get to the big deal."

Obama already has scaled back his ambitions for a sweeping budget bargain. Before leaving the capital on Friday, he called for a limited measure that extends George W. Bush-era tax cuts for most people and stave off federal spending cuts. The president also urged Congress to extend jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed that would otherwise be cut off for 2 million people at the end of the year.

The failure of Boehner's option in the House has shifted the focus.

"The ball is now clearly with the Senate," said Lieberman.

## FDA warns doctors of counterfeit Botox

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—Federal regulators have warned more than 350 medical practices that Botox they may have received from a Canadian supplier is unapproved and could be counterfeit or unsafe.

The Food and Drug Administration said in a letter sent last month, a letter released publicly last week, that batches of the wrinkle treatment shipped by suppliers owned by pharmacy Canada Drugs have not been approved by the FDA and that the agency cannot assure their effectiveness or their safety.

The FDA said Canada Drugs was previously tied to shipping unapproved and counterfeit cancer drugs.

The agency warned doctors about buying drugs from sources other than licensed U.S. pharmacies. It is the fifth warning the agency has made this year about foreign suppliers providing unapproved drugs.

In February, the agency warned 19 medical practices that they had received a counterfeit version of the cancer

drug Avastin. On three more occasions the FDA issued similar warnings about counterfeit Avastin and Altuzan, another brand name for the same drug. The alerts were also primarily targeted at drugs distributed by Canada Drugs.

A request for comment from the drug distributor was not immediately returned.

Drug shortages increased the financial incentives for some pharmacies to provide counterfeit or illegally imported drugs. The drugs subject to warnings have all been injectable treatments typically distributed through medical practices and not directly to patients.

In October, the FDA ordered operators of about 4,100 websites to immediately stop selling unapproved medications to U.S. consumers. The vast majority of those sites were operated by Canada Drugs. The site was still operating Friday.

Genuine Botox is made by Allergan Inc., based in Irvine, Calif. Avastin is made by Roche Holding AG's Genentech unit.

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### Oil prices lower in quiet holiday trading

**NEW YORK (AP)**—The price of oil fell slightly Monday during a shortened pre-Christmas trading day. Concerns over the political stalemate in Washington continue to be the focus of traders, with the price of U.S. benchmark oil closing down 5 cents to \$88.61 a barrel on the

New York Mercantile Exchange. Energy traders have been watching Democrats and Republicans clash over tax hikes and social service cuts. Normally, recent good economic data would signal more energy consumption and higher prices. But fears about the "fiscal cliff" have so far tempered prices, according to Phil Flynn of The Price Future

Group. "Because of the holiday, a lot of people are sitting on the sidelines," Flynn said. "We've priced in those scenarios and now we're just waiting for something definitive."

#### FDA approves Aegerion cholesterol disorder drug

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Fed-

eral regulators have approved Aegerion Pharmaceuticals' treatment for a rare inherited disease that causes extremely high levels of bad cholesterol, the company said Monday. The company's shares have been hitting annual highs but declined in early trading after the Food and Drug Administration approval of Juxtapid,

Aegerion's first drug, was announced. The availability of the drug will be restricted because of the risk of liver damage in patients and the box will carry a "black box" warning, the FDA's most severe safety warning. Aegerion must certify all health care providers that prescribe it. Juxtapid is a treatment for homozygous familial

hypercholesterolemia in conjunction with other measures to reduce "bad" LDL cholesterol. Aegerion believes there are about 3,000 people in the U.S. with the disease and treatments like blood filtration are generally not effective. The company said patients often die by the age of 30 because of heart attacks or strokes.

# Nation

## Some in Conn. town couple activism with mourning

**NEWTOWN, Conn.** (AP)—People drawn to Newtown to share in its mourning brought cards and handmade snowflakes to town Monday while residents prepared to observe Christmas less than two weeks after a gunman killed 20 children and six educators at an elementary school.

On Christmas Eve, residents said they would light luminaries outside their homes in memory of the victims. Tiny empty Christmas stockings with the victims' names on them hung from trees in the neighborhood where the children were shot.

"We know that they'll feel loved. They'll feel that somebody actually cares," said Treyvon Smalls, a 15-year-old from a few towns away who arrived at town hall with hundreds of cards and paper snowflakes collected from around the state.

Organizers said they wanted to let the families of victims know they are not alone while also giving Connecticut children a chance to express their feelings about the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

At the Trinity Episcopal Church, less than 2 miles from the school, an overflow crowd of several hundred people attended Christmas Eve services. They were greeted by the sounds of a children's choir echoing throughout a sanctuary hall that had its walls decorated with green wreaths adorned with red bows.

The church program said flowers were donated in honor of Sandy Hook shooting victims, identified by name or as the "school angels" and "Sandy Hook families."

The service, which generally took on a celebratory tone, made only a few vague references to the shooting. Pastor Kathie Adams-Shepherd led the congregation in praying "that the joy and consolation of the wonderful counselor might enliven all who are touched by illness, danger, or grief, especially all those families affected by the shootings in Sandy Hook."

Police say the gunman killed his

mother in her bed before his Dec. 14 rampage and committed suicide as he heard officers arriving. Authorities have yet to give a theory about his motive.

While the grief is still fresh, some residents are urging political activism in the wake of the tragedy. A grassroots group called Newtown United has been meeting at the library to talk about issues ranging from gun control, to increasing mental health services to

the types of memorials that could be erected for the victims. Some clergy members have said they also intend to push for change.

"We seek not to be the town of tragedy," said Rabbi Shaul Praver of Congregation Adath Israel. "But, we seek to be the town where all the great changes started."

Since the shooting, messages similar to the ones delivered Monday have arrived from around the



Alissa Parker, left, and her husband, Robbie Parker, center, carry their daughters, Samantha, 3, and Madeline, 4, following funeral services for their 6-year old daughter Emilie Parker on Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Ogden, Utah.

world. People have donated toys, books, money and more. A United Way fund, one of many, has collected \$3 million. People have given nearly \$500,000 to a memo-

## Police: NY gunman set 'trap' for firefighters

**WEBSTER, N.Y.** (AP)—An ex-con gunned down two firefighters after luring them to his neighborhood by setting a car and a house ablaze early Monday, then took shots at police and committed suicide while several homes burned.

Authorities used an armored vehicle to help residents flee dozens of homes on the shore of Lake Ontario a day before Christmas. Police restricted access to the neighborhood, and officials said it was unclear whether there were other bodies in the seven houses left to burn.

The gunman's sister, who lived with him, was unaccounted for. The gunman's motive was unknown.

William Spengler fired at the four firefighters when they arrived shortly after 5:30 a.m. at the blaze in Webster, a suburb of Rochester, town police Chief Gerald Pickering said. The first police officer who arrived chased the gunman and exchanged shots.

Spengler lay in wait outdoors for the firefighters' arrival, then opened fire probably with a rifle and from atop an earthen berm, Pickering said.

"It does appear it was a trap," he said.

Spengler had served more than 17 years in prison for beating his 92-year-old paternal grandmother to

death with a hammer in 1980 at the house next to where Monday's attack happened, Pickering said. Spengler, 62, was paroled in 1998 and had led a quiet life since, authorities said. Convicted felons are not allowed to possess weapons.

Two firefighters, one of whom also was a town police lieutenant, died at the scene, and two others were hospitalized. An off-duty officer who was passing by also was injured.

Another police officer, the one who exchanged gunfire with Spengler, "in all likelihood saved many lives," Pickering said.

Emergency radio communications capture someone saying he "could see the muzzle flash coming at me" as Spengler carried out his ambush. The audio posted on the website RadioReference.com has someone reporting "firefighters are down" and saying "got to be rifle or shotgun—high powered ... semi or fully auto."

Spengler lived in the house with his sister, Cheryl Spengler, and his mother, Arline Spengler, who died in October. He had originally been charged with murder in connection with grandmother Rose Spengler's death but pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of manslaughter.

## ACROSS THE NATION

### 1 killed, 1 wounded in bar shooting near Seattle

**BELLEVUE, Wash.** (AP)—A 30-year-old Seattle man was killed and another man wounded in a shooting at a crowded suburban bar early Monday, police said. Police issued an arrest warrant Monday evening for a 19-year-old man in connection with the shooting. The shooting broke out just after 1 a.m. at Munchbar at Bellevue Square, an upscale shopping center about 10 miles east of Seattle, said Carla Iafrate, a spokeswoman for the Bellevue Police Department. Police officers were outside the bar when gunfire erupted because a large crowd had gathered there, she said. More than 600 people were inside the venue at the time of the shooting. "It was a very complicated scene," Iafrate said. The wounded man was taken to Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue. Iafrate did not immediately know his age, hometown or condition.

### NY surfer who survived Sandy drowns in Puerto Rico

**NEW YORK** (AP)—A lifeguard widely praised as a hero after Superstorm Sandy for rescuing neighbors endangered by rolling floodwaters and a fire that destroyed several homes in a small community where grief has been a frequent visitor has died in a surfing accident in Puerto Rico. The death of 23-year-old Dylan Smith on Sunday brought sadness again to residents of the Belle Harbor section of the Rockaways, which lost several police officers and firefighters in the Sept. 11, 2001, terror

attacks and was the site of a deadly plane crash just months later. As word spread that Smith, who used his surfboard to ferry so many people to safety during the late October superstorm, had lost his life, a Heroes of Rockaway Facebook page said: "R.I.P. to Dylan Smith, our Rockaway Hero, tragically died this morning surfing in Puerto Rico. He will never be forgotten."

### Ex-President Bush to spend Christmas in hospital

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Former President George H.W. Bush will spend Christmas with his wife and other family members in a Houston hospital after developing a fever and weakness following a monthlong, bronchitis-like cough, his spokesman said Monday. A hospital spokesman had said the 88-year-old ex-president would be released in time to spend the holiday at home, but that changed after Bush developed a fever. "He's had a few setbacks. Late last week, he had a few low-energy days followed by a low-grade fever," Jim McGrath, Bush's spokesman in Houston, told The Associated Press. "Doctors still say they are cautiously optimistic, but every time they get over one thing, another thing pops up." He said the cough that initially brought Bush to the hospital on Nov. 23 is now evident only about once a day, and the fever appears to be under control, although doctors are still working to get the right balance in Bush's medications. No discharge date has been set.

## Nasty weather threatens Gulf Coast for Christmas

**NEW ORLEANS** (AP)—Nasty weather, including a chance of strong tornadoes and howling thunderstorms, could be on the way for Christmas Day along the Gulf Coast from east Texas to north Florida.

The storms held off long enough, though, to let Christmas Eve bonfires light the way for Pere Noel along the Mississippi River, officials said.

Farther north, much of Oklahoma and Arkansas were under a winter storm warning, with freezing rain, sleet and snow expected on Christmas. A blizzard watch is out for western Kentucky. And no matter what form the bad weather takes, travel on Tuesday could be dangerous, meteorologists said.

The storms could bring strong tornadoes or winds of more than 75 mph, heavy rain, quarter-sized hail and dangerous lightning in Louisiana and Mississippi, the National Weather Service said. The worst storms are likely from Winnsboro, La., to Jackson and DeKalb, Miss., according to the weather service's Jackson office.

"Please plan now for how you will receive a severe weather warning, and know where you will go when it is issued. It only takes a few minutes, and it will help everyone have a safe Christmas," said Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant.

In Alabama, the director of the Emergency Management Agency, Art Faulkner, said he was briefing both local officials and Gov. Robert Bentley on plans for dealing with a possible outbreak.

Forecasters said storms would begin near the coast and spread north through the day, bringing with them the chances of storms, particularly in central and southwest Alabama. No day is good for severe weather, but Faulkner said Christmas adds extra challenges because people are visiting unfamiliar areas. Also, people are more tuned in to holiday festivities than their weather radio on a day when thoughts typically turn more toward the possibility of snow than twisters, he said.

"We are trying to get the word

out through our media partners and through social media that people need to be prepared," Faulkner said.

Meteorologists also recommended getting yards ready Monday, bringing indoors or securing Christmas decorations, lawn furniture and anything else that high winds might rip away or slam into a building or car.

"Make sure they're all stable and secure—that there's not going to be any loose wires blowing around and stuff like that," or bring them inside, said Joe Rua, with the National Weather Service in Lake Charles, where storms were expected to roar in from Texas after midnight.

In the New Orleans suburb of Metairie, Timothy J. Babin said the 10 or so wire Christmas sculptures in his yard and more than 180 plastic figures in his mother's yard are staked down.

Dozens of toy soldiers, a nativity scene, Santa and nine reindeer (don't forget Rudolph), angels, snowmen and Santa Clauses fill the yard of his mother, Joy Babin.

# Asia

## Disputed Asian islands once had strategic role

**SUAO, Taiwan (AP)**—Perched on a narrow promontory jutting off Taiwan's heavily industrialized northeastern coast, the Suao naval base is only 220 kilometers (140 miles) from a rocky group of islets at the center of a bitter territorial dispute between Japan and China.

Along with Taiwan, the islets—called the Diaoyu islands in China and the Senkakus in Japan—form part of what military strategists call the “first island chain.” The string of islands and atolls extends along China's eastern periphery from South Korea to the southern Philippines, taking in a number of other disputed territories—notably the Paracel and Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

While most explanations for the territorial disputes focus on nationalistic pride and access to rich fishing grounds or potentially large reserves of oil and gas, the first island chain once figured prominently in strategic calculations—and some say still has strategic relevance today.

Military interest in the chain dates from at least the 1920s, when American planners concluded it could play a key role in helping the U.S. defend against rising Japanese militarism. After the communist victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949, Washington came to regard the chain as an important vehicle for containing Chinese military expansion, with special emphasis on Taiwan's role in it. U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur called the island “an unsinkable air-



This photo taken on Dec. 5, 2012, shows a view of a fishing village and marina which is shared with the naval base harbor in Suao, Taiwan.

craft carrier,” whose position 160 kilometers (100 miles) off China gave it the ability to project power all along the mainland's eastern coast.

MacArthur's doctrine helped focus Beijing's attention on the chain's strategic value. Admiral Liu Huaqing, head of the Chinese navy from 1982 to 1986, saw control of the waters within its boundaries as the first step in a three-stage strategy to transform the navy into a formidable platform for projecting Chinese power. The next stage, he wrote, involved controlling a second island chain linking the Ogasawara Islands—including Iwo Jima—with Guam and

Indonesia, while the third stage focused on ending American dominance throughout the Pacific and Indian oceans, largely by deploying aircraft carriers in the region.

Contemporary analysts are divided on whether the chain has lost its strategic relevance, notwithstanding the rapid expansion of the Chinese navy. Skeptics say that China's acquisition of advanced, longer-range missiles means it can defend itself from its own shores, though the island chain still creates vulnerable chokepoints for Chinese vessels heading to sea.

“In my view, technology is diminishing the relevance of

geographic strategy,” former American military attache in Beijing Mark Stokes said in an email. “For example, the ability to strike moving targets at sea from southeast China at extended ranges reduces the need for cruise missile platforms closer to sea lines.”

This view was echoed by Shanghai University of Law and Political Science military affairs expert Ni Lexiong.

“In the era of the fast development of military technology such as missiles, air strikes and nuclear weapons, the military role of the first island chain is getting less important,” Ni said. “For instance, if China acquires

advanced military technology, it will be useless for the U.S. ... to make military deployment along the first island chain because it's easy to get attacked.”

Countering Stokes and Ni are the geographic-centric arguments of chain advocates such as geopolitical analyst and author Robert Kaplan—his latest book is titled “The Revenge of Geography”—and East Asia military specialist Dan Blumenthal of Washington's American Enterprise Institute, who believes the chain is important in safeguarding U.S. strategic assets all the way to the sprawling American military facility in Guam.

“The chain matters,” Blumenthal wrote in an email, emphasizing the U.S. could thwart ocean-bound Chinese submarines at the chokepoints. “It is very hard to defend the Pacific if you lose the ability to slam the gate shut.”

The official American view appears to be to ignore the chain, lest an increasingly powerful China react aggressively. The Obama administration believes it makes far better sense to approach Beijing not so much as a rival but as a potential partner for dealing with a welter of crucial issues—nuclear proliferation, for example, as well as climate change and global economic security.

“We are in the same boat, and we will either row in the same direction or we will, unfortunately, cause turmoil and whirlpools that will impact

not just our two countries, but many people far beyond either of our borders,” Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton declared in a 2011 speech dedicated to U.S.-China relations.

Since then, the regional geopolitical climate has grown much tenser, fed by a series of confrontations between Japan and China over the disputed islets and escalating friction between Beijing and a number of Southeast Asian countries over expanding Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Under its “Pacific Pivot” policy, Washington has expanded military exercises in the region and placed important military resources in strategic Asian locations, but it has made no mention at all of the chain and avoided taking sides in the territorial disputes.

Treating the chain as a relic seems a dubious proposition here in Suao, which looks out onto a broad expanse of open water that Chinese naval vessels often cross en route to the Pacific. On a recent weekday morning, three Taiwanese corvettes lolled placidly in its waters, just to the west of a breakwater.

But the U.S. ended its direct military relationship with Taiwan in the run-up to the transfer of its recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, effectively removing Taiwan from the first island chain, and few analysts expect it will be reintegrated anytime soon.

## Afghan policewoman kills US adviser in Kabul

**KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)**—An Afghan policewoman walked into a high-security compound in Kabul Monday and killed an American contractor with a single bullet to the chest, the first such shooting by a woman in a spate of insider attacks by Afghans against their foreign allies.

Afghan officials who provided details identified the attacker as police Sgt. Nargas, a mother of four with a clean record. The shooting was outside the police headquarters in a walled compound which houses the governor's office, courts and a prison

in the heart of the capital.

A police official said she was able to enter the compound armed because she was licensed to carry a weapon as a police officer.

The American, whose identity was not released, was a civilian adviser who worked with the NATO command. He was shot as he came out of a small shop, Kabul Governor Abdul Jabar Taqwa told The Associated Press. The woman refused to explain her motive for her attack, he said.

The fact that a woman was

behind the assault shocked some Afghans.

“I was very shaken when I heard the news,” said Nasrullah Sadeqzada, an independent member of Parliament. “This is the first female to carry out such an attack. It is very surprising and sad,” he added, calling for more careful screening of all candidates, male and female, for the police force.

According to NATO, some 1,400 women were serving in the Afghan police force mid-year with 350 in the army -- still a very small proportion of the

350,000 in both services. Such professions are still generally frowned upon in this conservative society but women have made significant gains in recent years, with most jobs and education opportunities open to them, at least by law if not always in practice.

This is in stark contrast to the repression they suffered under the former Taliban regime, which forced women to be virtual prisoners in their homes, and severely punished them for even small infractions of the draconian codes.

## Police shut down roads to stop India rape protests

**NEW DELHI (AP)**—Authorities shut down roads in the heart of India's capital on Monday to put an end to a week of demonstrations against the brutal gang-rape of a woman on a moving bus.

Thousands of armed police and paramilitary troops blocked roads in central New Delhi to prevent protesters from marching to the presidential palace. A small group of demonstrators gathered at a venue about a ki-

lometer (less than a mile) away from India's parliament to press the government to ensure the security of women in the city.

The city ground to a halt as commuters found themselves caught in massive traffic jams after most roads in central Delhi were barricaded by police.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh appealed for calm and promised that the government would take tough action to pre-

vent crimes against women. There has been outrage across India over the Dec. 16 rape that left the young woman in critical condition in a hospital.

“Anger at this crime is justified, but violence will serve no purpose,” Singh told protesters.

He assured them that the government would “make all possible efforts to ensure security and safety of women in this country.”

Police have used tear gas and

water cannons and hit protesters with batons during the protests, leading to widespread criticism of authorities for the use of excessive force.

The demonstrations have continued despite repeated promises by Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde that he will consider protesters' demands that all six suspects who have been arrested following the attack face the death penalty.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Van crashes into pond in China; 11 children killed

**BEIJING (AP)**—A minivan carrying 15 children to kindergarten plunged into a roadside pond in a rural area of eastern China on Monday, killing 11 children, state media and an official said. Three children died at the scene of the accident in Guixi city in Jiangxi province and another eight died later in the hospital, said an official from the propaganda office of the city's Communist Party committee. Four children survived, said the official, who like many Chinese bureaucrats gave only his surname, Jiang. The accident is the latest in a string of deadly crashes in China involving schoolchildren.

#### Chinese man drives car into students, injuring 13

**BEIJING (AP)**—A man in northern China has rammed a car loaded with a gas tank and firecrackers into a group of middle school students, injuring 13. The official Xinhua News Agency says the man attempted to set off an explosion after running down 23 students at

Fengning No. 1 Middle School in northern China's Hebei province on Monday. The man is in police custody. Xinhua did not identify the man in its report Tuesday, but said his daughter was killed in a suspected murder case three years ago and he has a history of lodging complaints with authorities. Xinhua said the man did not act under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

#### Vietnamese rescue US man who drifted for 8 days

**HANOI, Vietnam (AP)**—Vietnamese fishermen have rescued an American man who had been drifting at sea for eight days on a disabled yacht. Coast-guard official Vo Hoang Liet from southern Soc Trang province said Monday that Kenneth Putney of Melbourne, Florida, was in good condition after being rescued Thursday. Liet says Putney, 54, told Vietnamese authorities that he and three others were towing a yacht from the Philippines to Thailand when the towing rope broke on Dec. 15. He says Putney jumped onto the yacht because he feared it would be lost.

## World

## South Africa: World watches Mandela's struggle

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—A chipped street mural in South Africa's Soweto township depicts stations in the life of Nelson Mandela, each matched by a portrait of the global icon as he advanced from robust youth to old age. Now this infirm giant of history faces a struggle with mortality, its duration unknown but its outcome certain.

There may be no living figure so revered around the world as a symbol of sacrifice and reconciliation, his legacy forged in the fight against apartheid, the system of white minority rule that imprisoned him for 27 years.

As an idea, Mandela is monumental. As a 94-year-old man, he is frail and vulnerable, in hospital since Dec. 8, shielded from outside scrutiny by protective relatives and the South African government and military.

"He's sick. What can we do? He's sick," said Beauty Sedunedi, a Soweto resident



Workers riding on a truck pass a wall of portraits depicting former South African president Nelson Mandela in Soweto, South Africa, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2012. Officials said Wednesday that Mandela "has made progress" after contracting a lung infection, as the 94-year-old leader's stay in a military hospital in Pretoria stretched into a fifth day.

AP

comings as a president when he took office for a five-year term after the country's first democratic elections in 1994. The country today struggles with poverty and inequality, but Mandela is widely credited with helping to avert race-driven chaos as South Africa emerged from apartheid.

He was diagnosed with a lung infection and had a procedure to remove gallstones after being admitted to a Pretoria hospital, and the South African presidency said Monday that Mandela would spend Christmas Day there. The physical decline of Mandela, who boxed in his youth and exercised regularly in prison, could be anyone's story; an ordinary man would make this wistful journey alone, or within the cocoon of family intimacy.

In the case of a man-turned-myth, however, the media, the government and the nation are passengers on what has become an awkward ride, defined by tension between the right to medical privacy and the public's interest.

"They were very secretive about his health," Sebastian Moloi, another resident of the Johannesburg township of Soweto, said of the government's initial, sometimes contradictory pronouncements about Mandela's condition. "They shouldn't keep it away from the public."

who described Mandela as a hero. "People are crying, 'Oh, he mustn't die, he mustn't...' If God says 'come,' he'll come."

The former president would probably agree with that down-to-earth sentiment, as a man who is said to have been uncomfortable with his iconic status. The narrative of what he endured and what he contributed in the name of all South Africans tends to eclipse any personal failings, or short-

## At Christmas Eve Mass, pope urges space for God

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Pope Benedict XVI marked Christmas Eve with Mass in St. Peter's Basilica and a pressing question: Will people find room in their hectic, technology-driven lives for children, the poor and God?

The pontiff also prayed that Israelis and Palestinians live in peace and freedom, and asked the faithful to pray for strife-torn Syria as well as Lebanon and Iraq.

The ceremony began at 10 p.m. local time Monday with the blare of trumpets, meant to symbolize Christian joy over the news of Christ's birth in Bethlehem. As midnight neared, church bells tolled throughout Rome, while inside the basilica, the sweet voices of the Vatican's boys' choir resounded joyously.

Christmas Eve Mass at the Vatican traditionally began at midnight, but the start time was moved up years ago so as to give the 85-year-old pontiff more time to rest before his Christmas Day speech. That address is to be delivered at midday Tuesday from the basilica's

central balcony.

A smiling Benedict, dressed in gold-colored vestments, waved to photo-snapping pilgrims and applauding churchgoers as he glided up the center aisle toward the ornate main altar of the cavernous basilica on a wheeled platform guided by white-gloved aides. The platform saves him energy.

In his homily, Benedict cited the Gospel account of Mary and Joseph finding no room at an inn and ending up in a stable which sheltered the baby Jesus. He urged people to reflect upon what they find time for in their busy, technology-driven lives.

"The great moral question of our attitude toward the homeless, toward refugees and migrants takes on a deeper dimension: Do we really have room for God when he seeks to enter under our roof? Do we have time and space for him?" the pope said.

## UN envoy worried after talks with Syria's Assad

BEIRUT (AP)—The international envoy to Syria said after talks with the country's leader Monday that the situation was "worrying" and gave no indication of progress toward a negotiated solution for the civil war.

Lakhdar Brahimi's mission came as activists reported intense fighting in the central province of Hama, where anti-government gunmen entered the predominantly Alawite town of Maan. Assad's regime is dominated by members of his minority Alawite sect, an off-shoot of Shiite Islam, while most of the rebels are Sunni Muslims.

Brahimi said he and President Bashar Assad exchanged views on the crisis and discussed possible steps forward, which he did not disclose. He

spoke briefly to reporters after meeting the Syrian leader at the presidential palace in Damascus.

"The situation in Syria is still worrying and we hope that all the parties will go toward the solution that the Syrian people are hoping for and look forward to," Brahimi said.

Syria's state news agency quoted Assad as saying his government supports "any effort in the interest of the Syrian people which preserves the homeland's sovereignty and independence."

Brahimi has apparently made little progress toward brokering an end to the conflict since starting his job in September, primarily because both sides adamantly refuse to talk to each other.

The government describes the rebels as foreign-backed terrorists set on destroying the country. The opposition says that forces under Assad's command have killed too many people for him to be part of any solution.

Activists say more than 40,000 people have been killed since the Syrian uprising began in March 2011.

Brahimi's two-day visit was to end later Monday. It is his third to Damascus as an envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League.

The security situation in Damascus and elsewhere in the country has declined since Brahimi's previous visits. Instead of flying in to the Damascus International Airport as he did on earlier visits, Brahimi

drove to Damascus over land from the Lebanese capital Beirut because of fighting near the Damascus airport.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights quoted activists in the central city of Homs as saying that six rebels died in two neighborhoods Sunday night after inhaling white smoke that came out of shells fired on the area.

"We demand that an international team be sent to the area to investigate the type" of the shells used, said Observatory chief Rami Abdul-Rahman.

Amateur videos released by activists showed men in hospital beds suffering breathing problems as doctors placed oxygen masks on their faces. Some of them coughed strongly as they tried to breathe.

## Israel rejects US gun lobby claims on its security

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel's policy on issuing guns is restrictive, and armed guards at its schools are meant to stop terrorists, not crazed or disgruntled gunmen, experts said Monday, rejecting claims by America's top gun lobby that Israel serves as proof for its philosophy that the U.S. needs more weapons, not fewer.

Far from the image of a heavily armed population where ordinary people have their own arsenals to repel attackers, Israel allows its people to acquire firearms only if they can prove their professions or places of residence put them in danger. The country relies on its security services, not armed citizens,

to prevent terror attacks.

Though military service in Israel is compulsory, routine familiarity with weapons does not carry over into civilian life. Israel has far fewer private weapons per capita than the U.S., and while there have been gangster shootouts on the streets from time to time, gun rampages outside the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are unheard of.

The National Rifle Association responded to the Dec. 14 killing of 20 first-graders and six adults at a Connecticut elementary school by resisting calls for tighter gun control and calling for armed guards and police at schools. On Sunday, the lobby's chief execu-

tive, Wayne LaPierre, invoked his perception of the Israeli school security system to back his proposal.

"Israel had a whole lot of school shootings until they did one thing: They said, 'We're going to stop it,' and they put armed security in every school and they have not had a problem since then," LaPierre said on the NBC News show "Meet the Press."

Israel never had "a whole lot of school shootings." Authorities could only recall two in the past four decades.

In 1974, 22 children and three adults were killed in a Palestinian attack on an elementary school in Maalot, near the border with Lebanon. The attack-

ers' goal was to take the children hostage and trade them for imprisoned militants.

In 2008, another Palestinian assailant killed eight young people, most of them teens, at a nighttime study session at a Jewish religious seminary in Jerusalem. An off-duty soldier who happened to be in the area killed the attacker with his personal firearm.

Israel didn't mandate armed guards at the entrances to all schools until 1995, the Education Ministry said—more than two decades after the Maalot attack and two years after a Palestinian militant wounded five pupils and their principal in a knifing at a Jerusalem school.

# Focus

## Young children are often victims of gunfire in US

MONIKA MATHUR  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SUZANNE GAMBOA  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Before 20 small children were massacred at school by a gunman in Newtown, Connecticut, Luke Schuster, 6, was shot to death in New Town, North Dakota. Six-year-olds John

Devine Jr. and Jayden Thompson were similarly killed in Kentucky and Texas.

Veronica Moser-Sullivan, 6, died in a mass shooting at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, while 6-year-old Kammia Perry was slain by her father outside her Cleveland home, according to an Associated Press review of 2012 media reports.

Yet there was no gunman on the loose when Julio Segura-McIntosh died in Tacoma, Washington. The 3-year-old accidentally shot himself in the head while playing with a gun he found inside a car.

As he mourned with the families of Newtown, President Barack Obama said the U.S. cannot accept such violent deaths of children as routine. But hundreds of young child deaths by gunfire — whether intentional or accidental — suggest it might already have.

Between 2006 and 2010, 561 children age 12 and under were killed by firearms, according to the FBI's most recent Uniform Crime Reports. The numbers each year are consistent: 120 in 2006; 115 in 2007; 116 in 2008, 114 in 2009 and 96 in 2010. The FBI's count does not include gun-related child deaths that authorities have ruled accidental.

"This happens on way too regular a basis and it affects families and communities — not at once, so we don't see it and we don't understand it as part of our national experience," said Daniel Webster, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research.

The true number of small children who died by gunfire in 2012 will not be known for a couple of years, when official reports are collected and dumped into a database and analyzed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expects to release its 2011 count in the spring.

In response to what happened in Newtown, the National Rifle Association, the nation's largest gun lobby, suggested shielding children from gun violence by putting an armed police officer in every school by the time classes resume in January.

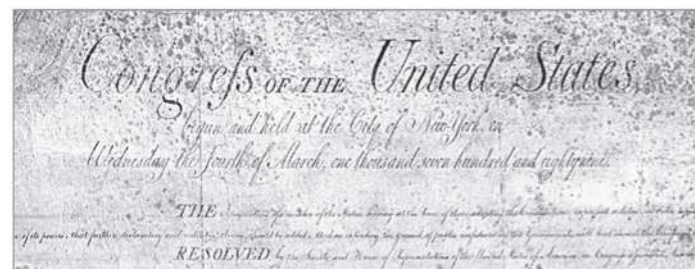
"Politicians pass laws for gun-free school zones ... They post signs advertising them and in doing so they tell every insane killer in America that schools are the safest place to inflict maximum mayhem with minimum risk," said NRA executive vice president Wayne LaPierre.

Webster said children are more likely to die by gunfire at home or in the street. They tend to be safer when they are in school, he said.

None of the 61 deaths reviewed by The Associated Press happened at school.

### Gun control: What's the law?

Gun control in the U.S. is largely governed by a few key federal laws and a variety of state restrictions. The federal government taxes the making and selling of guns, requires background checks and regulates who can own a gun. Also, states have imposed further restrictions.

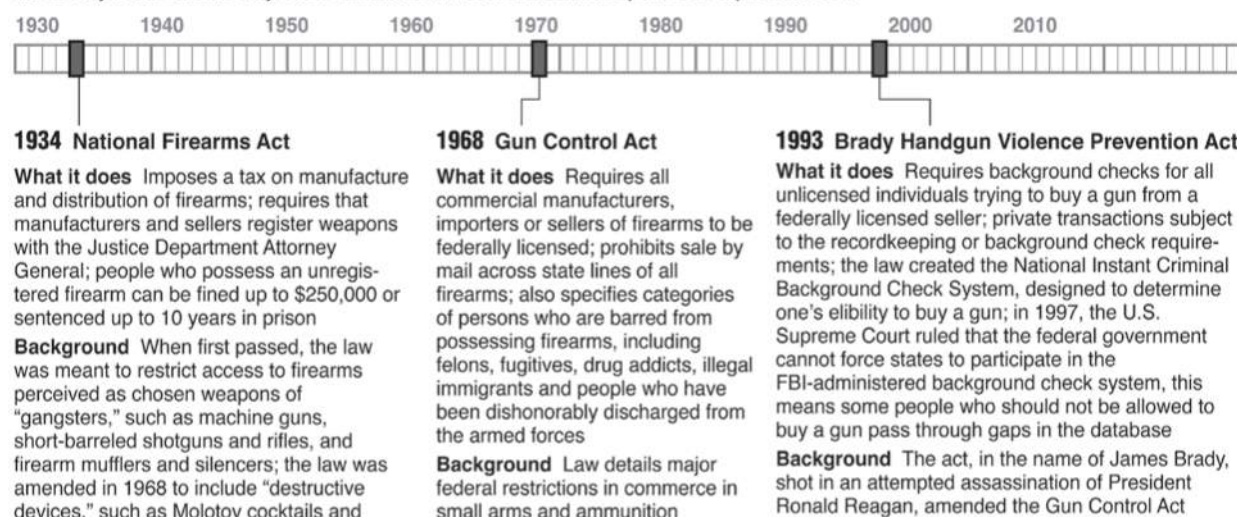


#### The U.S. Constitution

U.S. Supreme Court decisions to overturn handgun bans in Washington (2008) and Chicago (2010) affirmed the Second Amendment right to bear arms applies to individuals.

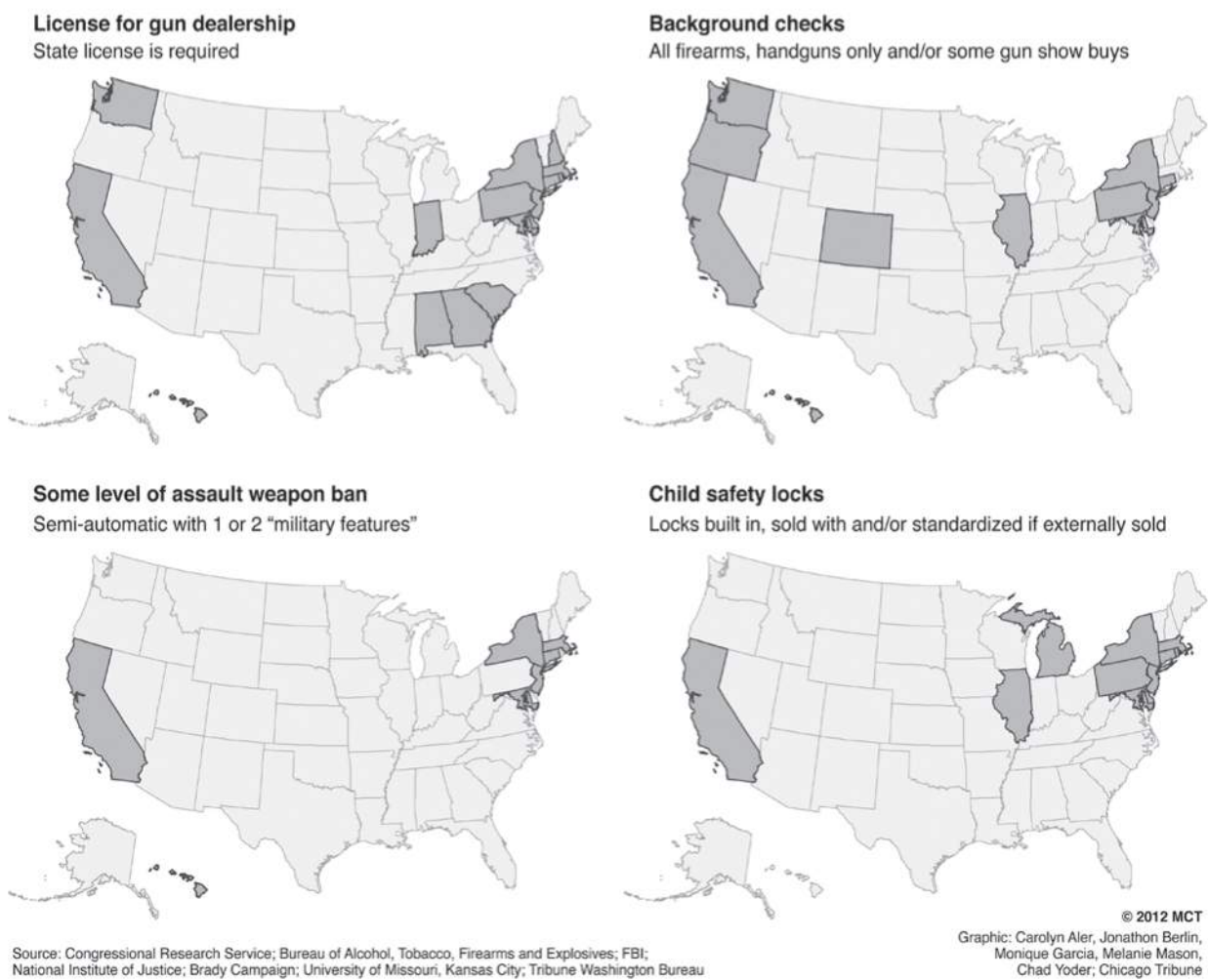
#### Federal laws

These major laws are the major federal statutes. A federal assault weapons ban expired in 2004.



#### State laws

The following states have various restrictions, as collected by the Brady Center.



Children die by many other methods as well: violent stabbings or throat slashings, drowning, beating and strangulation. But the gruesome recounts of gun deaths, sometimes just a few paragraphs in a newspaper or on a website, a few minutes on television or radio, bear witness that firearms too, are cutting short many youngsters' lives.

One week before the Newtown slay-

ings, Alyssa Celaya, 8, bled to death after being shot by her father with a .38-caliber gun at the Tule River Indian Reservation in California. Her grandmother and two brothers also were killed, a younger sister and brother were shot and wounded. The father shot and killed himself amid a hail of gunfire from officers.

Delric Miller's life ended at 9 months

and Angel Mauro Cortez Nava's at 14 months.

Delric was in the living room of a home on Detroit's west side Feb. 20 when someone sprayed it with gunfire from an AK-47. Other children in the home at the time were not injured.

Angel was cradled in his father's arms on a sidewalk near their home in Los Angeles when a bicyclist rode

by on June 4 and opened fire, killing the infant.

Most media reports do not include information on the type of gun used, sometimes because police withhold it for investigation purposes.

Gun violence and the toll it is taking on children has been an issue raised for years in minority communities.

The NAACP, a civil rights group, failed in its attempt to hold gun makers accountable through a lawsuit filed in 1999. Some in the community raised the issue during the campaign and asked Obama after he was re-elected to make reducing gun violence, particularly as a cause of death for young children, part of his second-term agenda.

"Now that it's clear that no community in this country is invulnerable from gun violence, from its children being stolen ... we can finally have the national conversation we all need to have," said Ben Jealous, president of the NAACP.

This year's gun deaths reviewed by the AP show the problem is not confined to the inner city or is simply the result of gang or drug violence, as often is the perception.

Faith Ehlen, 22 months, Autumn Cochran, 10, and Alyssa Cochran, 11, all died Sept. 6. Their mother killed them with the shotgun before turning it on herself. Police said she had written a goodbye email to her boyfriend before killing the children in DeSoto, Missouri, a community of about 6,300.

In Dundee, Oregon, Randall Engels used a gun to kill his estranged wife Amy Engels and son Jackson, 11, as they ate pizza on the Fourth of July. An older sibling of Jackson's also was killed. Engels then committed suicide. The town of more than 5,000 people boasts on its website that it is a semirural town with "the cultural panache of a big city."

Many of the children who died in 2012 were shot with guns that belonged to their parents, relatives or baby sitters, or were simply in the home. Webster said children's accidental deaths by guns have fallen since states passed laws requiring that guns be locked away from youths or have safeties to keep them from firing.

But even people trained in gun use slip up—and the mistakes are costly.

A Springville, Utah, police officer had a non-service gun in his home that officials said did not have external safeties. His 2-year-old son found the gun and shot himself on Sept. 11. The names of the father and son were not released at the time of the shooting.

Obama has tapped Vice President Joe Biden to shape the administration's response to the Newtown massacre. The administration will push to tighten gun laws, many that have faced resistance in Congress for years. The solutions may include reinstating a ban on assault-style rifles, closing gun buying background check loopholes and restricting high-capacity magazines.

Those may have limited effect for children like Amari Markel-Purrel Perkins, of Clinton, Maryland. He shot himself in the chest on April 9 with a gun that an adult had stashed inside a Spiderman backpack.

Like most of the child victims at Newtown, Amari was 6.

## Campus Life

# Tablet as teacher: Poor Ethiopian kids learn ABCs

JASON STRAZIUSO  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WENCHI, Ethiopia (AP)**—The kids in this volcano-rim village wear filthy, ragged clothes. They sleep beside cows and sheep in huts made of sticks and mud. They don't go to school. Yet they all can chant the English alphabet, and some can spell words.

The key to their success: 20 tablet computers dropped off in their Ethiopian village in February by a group called One Laptop Per Child.

The goal is to find out whether children using today's new technology can teach themselves to read in places where no schools or teachers exist. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers analyzing the project data say they're already startled.

"What I think has already happened is that the kids have already learned more than they would have in one year of kindergarten," said Matt Keller, who runs the Ethiopia program.

The fastest learner is 8-year-old Kelbesa Negusse, the first to turn on one of the Motorola Xoom tablets last February. Its camera was disabled to save memory, yet within weeks Kelbesa had figured out the tablet's workings and made the camera work.

He proclaimed himself a lion, a marker of accomplishment in Ethiopia.

On a recent sunny weekday, nine months into the project, the kids sat in a dark hut with a hay floor. At 3,380 meters (11,000) feet above sea level, the air at night here is chilly, and the youngsters coughed and wiped runny noses. Many were barefoot. But they all eagerly tapped and swiped away on their tablets.

The apps encouraged them to click on colors — green, red, yellow. "Awesome," one app said aloud. Kelbesa rearranged the letters HSROE into one of the many English animal names he knows. Then he spelled words on his own, tracing the English letters into his tablet in a thick red line.

"He just spelled the word 'bird!'" exclaimed Keller. "Seven months ago he didn't know any English. That's unbelievable. That's a quantum leap forward."

"If we prove that kids can teach themselves how to read, and then read to learn, then the world is going to look at technology as a way to change the world's poorest and most remote kids," he said.

"We will have proven you can actually reach these kids and change the way that they think and look at the world. And this is the promise that this technology holds."

Maryanne Wolf, a Tufts Uni-



In this photo taken Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2012, children play with tablet computers given to them by the One Laptop Per Child project in the village of Wench, Ethiopia.

versity professor, studies the origins of reading and language learning and is a consultant to the One Laptop project. She was an early critic of the experiment in Ethiopia but was amazed by the disabled-camera incident.

"It's crazy. I can't do that. I couldn't hack into anything," she said. "But they learned. And the learning that's gone on, that's very impressive to me, the critic, because I did not assume they would gravitate toward the more literacy-oriented apps that they have."

Wench's 60 families grow potatoes and produce honey. None of the adults can read. They broadly support the laptop project and express amazement their children were lucky enough to be chosen.

"I think if you gave them food and water they would never leave the computer room," said Teka Kumula, who charges the tablets from a solar station built by One Laptop. "They would spend day and night here."

Kumula Misgana, 70, walked into the hut that One Laptop built to watch the kids. Three of them had started a hay fight. "I'm fascinated by the technology," Misgana said. "There are pictures of animals I didn't even know existed."

He added: "We are a bit jealous. Everyone would love this opportunity, but we are happy for the kids."

Kelbesa, the boy lion, said: "I prefer the computer over my friends because I learn things with the computer." Asked what English words he knows, he rattled off a barnyard: "Dog, donkey, horse, sheep, cow, pig, cat."

Kelbesa, one of four children, is being raised by his widowed mother, Abelbech Wagari, who dreams the tablet is his gateway to higher education.

While the adults appeared grateful for the One Laptop opportunity, they wished the village had a teacher.

Keller said that Nicholas Ne-

groponte, the MIT pioneer in computer science who founded One Laptop, is designing a program for the 100 million children worldwide who don't get to attend school. Wolf said Negroponte wants to tap into children's "very extraordinary capacity to teach themselves," though she said she has no desire to see teachers replaced.

The goal of the project is to get kids to a stage called "deep reading," where they can read to learn. It won't be in Amharic, Ethiopia's first language, but English, which is widely seen as

the ticket to higher paying jobs.

Keller and Wolf say they are only at the beginning of understanding the significance of how fast the kids of Wench have mastered the English ABCs. The experiment will be replicated in other villages in other countries, using more targeted apps.

One might wonder whether the children of Wench need good nutrition and warm clothes rather than a second language and no teacher — a question Wolf said has given her some sleepless nights.

She thinks she has arrived at

an answer.

In remote regions of Africa and elsewhere, she said, "the mother who has one year of literacy has a far better chance to make sure her child can live to five years of age. They are savvier when it comes to medicine, to basic health, to economic development."

"So at 3 a.m. when I'm thinking, if I can do one thing ... using my particular knowledge, which is in reading and brain development and thinking — this is my shot; this is my contribution to the nutrition and health of a child."



In this photo taken Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2012, technician Michael Girma from the One Laptop Per Child project switches out the memory card from a tablet computer given to children in the village of Wench, Ethiopia.

# Life & Style

## In bite-sized roles, Gandolfini ubiquitous again

**NEW YORK (AP)**—In the five years since “The Sopranos” ended, James Gandolfini has eschewed the spotlight, instead disappearing into a heap of character actor performances that, while they may lack the heft of Tony Soprano, have only further proved the actor’s wide-ranging talent.

This season offers a glut of Gandolfini, albeit in bite-sized parts. In Kathryn Bigelow’s Osama bin Laden hunt docu-drama “Zero Dark Thirty,” he plays Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. In David Chase’s ‘60s period drama “Not Fade Away,” he plays the old-school father of a wannabe rocker. And in Andrew Dominick’s crime flick “Killing Them Softly,” he plays an aged, washed-up hit man.

None of the roles are showy lead men, and that’s just fine with Gandolfini.

“I’m much more comfortable doing smaller things,” Gandolfini said in a recent interview. “I like them. I like the way they’re shot; they’re shot quickly. It’s all about the scripts—that’s what it is—and I’m getting some interesting little scripts.”

The 51-year-old actor takes scant pleasure in interviews and rarely does them. This is partly because Gandolfini—sitting attentively with his hands on his knees, his head back and his let’s-hear-what-you-have-to-say eyes tilted downward—dis-trusts the ego-inflating effect of attention. Explaining his interest in a character, he breaks off: “I always wonder how interesting any of this is to people. It’s just my own (stuff).”

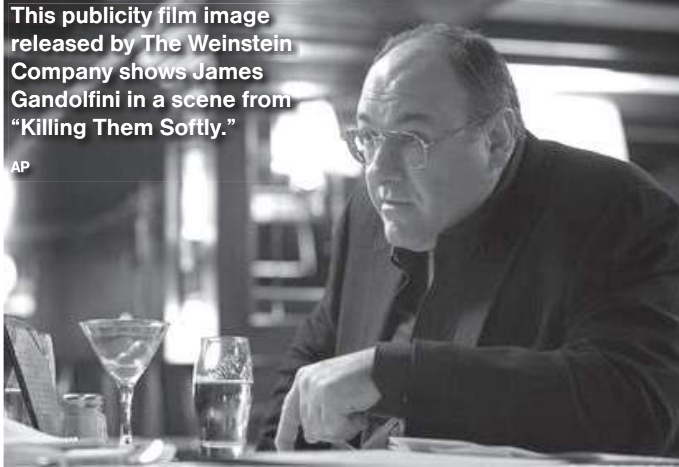
Though Gandolfini’s achievement playing Tony Soprano for eight years is unquestioned (he won three Emmy awards), the sensation of the show—and the long time spent playing a violent, sometimes loathsome gangster—grated on Gandolfini. He says that after “The Sopranos,” he didn’t quite regain himself as an actor until he starred in the Tony-winning play “God of Carnage” on Broadway in 2009. He played half of a Brooklyn couple trying to resolve a squabble with another couple over a fight between their children—a part also revealing of our underlying animism.

“It really grounded me more as an actor again,” says Gandolfini. “Then I could go off and try different things.”

Gandolfini’s recent work has vacillated from comedy, his genre of choice (as a Washington general in the political satire “In the Loop”) to heartwarming drama (as a businessman moved to rehabilitate an abandoned teenage girl, Kristen Stewart, in “Welcome to the Rileys”). He voiced the Wild Thing Carol in “Where the Wild Things Are,” a performance that, by stripping him of his sizable frame, highlighted his tenderness.

This publicity film image released by The Weinstein Company shows James Gandolfini in a scene from “Killing Them Softly.”

AP



**Invites qualified US workers to apply for the following positions:**

**(1) GUEST RELATIONS MANAGER - CHINA MARKET**

Qualifications: Must have at least 4 years of progressive experience in management level and 5 years in the Hospitality Industry. Able to multi-task and must possess exceptional customer service and interpersonal skills. Proficient in both oral and written communication (English and Mandarin Chinese). Planning and problem-solving skills are essential. Must have the ability to manage a department in a changing environment and manage employees’ performance.

**(3) MASSAGE THERAPIST**

Qualifications: Must have gone through training in a vocational school or acquired at least 2 years of related on-the-job experience (Shiatsu, Oil and Foot Massage) in a spa environment. Ability to speak Mandarin Chinese is an advantage. Must be able to adapt to changes in work assignments and willing to work on evenings, weekends and holidays.

**(1) EVENTS MANAGER**

Qualifications: Strong background and experience in Food & Beverage/Events preferably in the hospitality industry. Possess the ability to work quickly, accurately, creatively and independently in a fast-paced environment. 5 years work experience required. Must be able to work a variable schedule on occasion, including early morning, evenings and/or weekends.

Application Forms may be obtained from our Security Office located at the South Wing. To be considered, applications must be submitted not later than December 29, 2012. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

**Fiesta Resort & Spa, Saipan is an Equal Opportunity Employer  
Qualified Women, Minorities, Veterans and Persons  
with Disabilities are urged to apply.**

Saipan Tribune, Inc. is inviting qualified applicants to apply for the following positions:

**Accounting and Circulations Manager**

College degree with financial management major and 3 years of progressive financial management and newspaper circulation experience. Minimum of 5 years experience in directing the preparation of financial reports and implementing cash management and newspaper circulation activities. Excellent communication and strong interpersonal skills to manage a work team and independent contractors. Proficient in the use of SAP R3 Financial and Controlling (FICO) system and Microsoft software. CPA not required.

**Graphic Designer (3)**

Associate’s degree in Graphic Design or other related field. Minimum of 3 years work experience doing computer graphics and newspaper layout. Proficiency in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe InDesign is a must. Must be familiar with offset printing process, computer peripherals, and Mac operating system. Strong organizational and self-management skills, including the ability to multi-task and prioritize are required. Can work flexible hours, weekends, and holidays, depending on demand.

**Advertising Sales Agent**

Associates degree in Business Administration or any related course. Minimum of 3 years solid experience in advertising and sales is required. Must have the ability to compose clear business correspondence and prepare and meet monthly sales targets. A background in a printing or newspaper business is an advantage. Proficient in MS Word, Excel and Power Point and must work flexible hours.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at Saipan Tribune, Inc. office located at JP Center Building in Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Monday, December 31, 2012.

Saipan Tribune, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.  
Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons  
are encouraged to apply.

L&T Group of Companies is inviting qualified applicants to apply for the following positions:

**Management Accountant (2)**

College degree with accounting or financial management major and 5 years of progressive financial management experience. Minimum of 3 years experience in analyzing, interpreting and providing sound financial information. Must be adept in monthly financial statement preparation and consolidation, cash flow forecasting, budgeting, and providing financial projections. Must have excellent communication, organizational and self-management skills. Proficient in the use of SAP R3 Financial and Controlling (FICO) system and Microsoft Excel, Power Point and Project. CPA not required.

**Engineering Manager**

Bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering with at least 5 years of progressive management experience. Ability to successfully develop, implement and manage projects including the ability to provide effective leadership is a must. Adeptness in cost estimation and knowledge of quality control and federal regulations in environmental and occupational safety hazards is required. The duties of this job require constant outside travel and exposure to outside weather conditions. Must be able to provide his/her own transportation and must have a valid driver’s license.

**Sales Officer**

Associate’s Degree in Sales or Marketing and at least 3 years work related experience are required. Must have his/her own reliable transportation. Must be able to meet monthly sales targets and have extensive contacts in various industries. Must be able to prepare management and sales reports and is proficient in various MS office software operations. Can work flexible hours. Must be available to work on weekends, holidays and weeknights.

**IT Manager**

College degree with a major in computer science, computer technology or information engineering or other related areas is required. At least 5 years of progressive management experience and 8 years of sound and all-around IT technical experience is required. Must have well-developed written/oral and management skills and with a strong background in all IT hardware, software and communication business requirements.

**Computer Technician**

Associate’s degree in any computer science, information technology or other related areas. Must have at least 3 years of sound experience in electronics and communication systems with emphasis on the repair of computer equipment and installation of telephone cables/systems. Must be knowledgeable in different software applications and in hardware troubleshooting. Must be able to work flexible hours.

**Graphic Designer**

Associate’s degree in Fine Arts, Graphic Design or other related areas. Minimum of 3 years work experience in creating graphics to meet specific commercial or promotional needs. Proficiency in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe InDesign is a must. Strong organizational and self-management skills, including the ability to multi-task and prioritize are required. Can work flexible hours, depending on demand.

**Programmer Analyst (2)**

Associate’s degree in computer science or computer programming and at least 3 years of work-related experience in a professional Microsoft Windows environment. Strong practical knowledge in relational databases management particularly in midrange RDMS environment such as SQL server. Knowledge in windows-based and web-based programming is a must.

**Accountant (3)**

Associate’s Degree in Finance or Accounting with at least 3 years work related experience in financial management and/or payroll and general accounting procedures with emphasis on receivables and payable management. Proficient in the use of SAP R3 FICO system and MS Excel, Word and Power Point software. Must be able to work under time pressure and must work flexible hours. CPA not required.

**Legal Secretary (2)**

Associates degree and at least 2 years work related experience in a legal office. Proficient in case and document management software, Microsoft Office Word, Excel, Power Point and Outlook. Familiar in preparation and filing of pleadings and legal documents.

**Accounting Manager**

College degree with financial management major and 5 years of progressive financial management experience. Minimum of 3 years experience in directing the preparation of financial reports and implementing cash management activities. Excellent communication and strong interpersonal skills to manage people. Proficient in the use of SAP R3 Financial and Controlling (FICO) system and Microsoft software.

**Network Administration Manager**

Associate’s degree in any computer science, information engineering or other computer technology related areas. Must have at least 5 years of sound experience in local and wide area networks management and administration including system configuration, setup, troubleshooting, planning, designing, implementation, and user support. Must have knowledge in MS Exchange Email Server.

**Housekeeper (5)**

High school diploma or GED Certificate. Dependable attendance, hard working and follows directions well. Must be available to work early mornings, late nights and weekends.

**Administrative Assistant (5)**

Associate’s Degree. Must be proficient in typing and good at written and oral communication. Must be able to consistently demonstrate good customer service and interpersonal skills at work. Can work flexible hours. Must be available to work on weekends, holidays and weeknights.

**Business Operations Manager**

Graduate of a 4-year degree course and with a minimum of 8 years of professional progressive management experience and at least 4 years of general management experience in property management and building maintenance. Knowledge of lease negotiations plus financial and quality management is required. Must have a solid track record in accomplishing business objectives.

**Air conditioning & Refrigeration Mechanic**

Associate’s Degree or Vocational School graduate. Must have at least 2 years experience installing, servicing, and repairing air conditioning and refrigerating systems in residences and commercial establishments. Must have his/her own reliable transportation and must be able to work flexible hours.

**Electrician**

High school diploma or GED certificate. Must have at least 2 years experience installing, maintaining, and/or repairing electrical wiring, equipment, and fixtures. Must have knowledge of electrical codes, intercom and electrical control systems. Must be able to work flexible hours.

**General Maintenance Worker (12)**

High school diploma or GED certificate or any combination of education, training, and experience which demonstrates ability to perform carpentry, plumbing, glass replacement, painting, masonry, grounds keeping, appliance repair, and electrical wiring; standard practices and use a variety of hand and power tools used in the maintenance and repair of building facilities. Must be able to work flexible hours. Can work outdoors.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. office located at JP Center Building in Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Wednesday, January 02, 2013.

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is an  
Equal Opportunity Employer.

Qualified women, minorities and disabled  
persons are encouraged to apply.

# 'Odd Couple' star Jack Klugman dies in LA at 90

**LOS ANGELES (AP)—**For many, Jack Klugman will always be the messy one.

His portrayal of sloppy sportswriter Oscar Madison on TV's "The Odd Couple" left viewers laughing but it also gave Klugman the leverage to create a more serious character, the gruff medical examiner in "Quincy M.E." His everyman ethos and comic timing endeared him to audiences and led to a prolific, six-decade acting career that spanned stage, screen and television.

Klugman died Monday at age 90 in suburban Northridge with his wife at his side. His sons called on his fans to embrace their father's tenacious and positive spirit.

"He had a great life and he enjoyed every moment of it, and he would encourage others to do the same," son Adam Klugman said.

The cause of Klugman's death was not immediately known. Adam Klugman said his father had been slowing down in recent years, but wasn't battling cancer, which robbed him of his voice in the 1980s. Klugman taught himself to speak again, and kept working.

He remained popular for decades simply by playing the type of man you could imagine running into at a bar or riding on a subway with—gruff, but down-to-earth, his tie stained and a little loose, a racing form under his arm, a cigar in hand during the days when smoking was permitted.

Off-screen, Klugman owned racehorses and enjoyed gambling, although acting remained his passion.

Despite his on-screen wars

with Tony Randall's neat-freak character Felix Unger on "Odd Couple," the show created a friendship between the men that endured after the series ended.

When Randall died in 2004 at age 84, Klugman told CNN: "A world without Tony Randall is a world that I cannot recognize."

The "Odd Couple," which ran from 1970 to 1975, was based on Neil Simon's play about mismatched roommates—divorced New Yorkers who end up living together. The comedy came from their opposite personalities—Klugman playing a writer whose sloppiness consistently irritated the Randall's fussy photographer character. The pairing was so good, the show didn't need constant help from the writers.

"There's nobody better to improvise with than Tony," Klugman said. "A script might say, 'Oscar teaches Felix football.' There would be four blank pages. He would provoke me into reacting to what he did. Mine was the easy part."

Fans and fellow actors agreed it worked, posting clips of their favorite Klugman roles on Twitter and other social networking sites late Monday.

"RIP Jack Klugman. You made my whole family laugh together," actor-director Jon Favreau wrote on Twitter.

"He was a wonderful man and supremely talented actor," wrote actor Max Greenfield, who worked with Klugman several years ago. "He will be missed."

In "Quincy, M.E.," which



In this June 15, 2008 file photo, Jack Klugman speaks at the 62nd Annual Tony Awards in New York. Klugman, who made an art of gruffness in TV's "The Odd Couple" and "Quincy, M.E.," has died at the age of 90.

ran from 1976 to 1983, Klugman played an idealistic, tough-minded medical examiner who tussled with his boss by uncovering evidence of murder in cases where others saw natural causes.

"We had some wonderful writers," he said in a 1987 Associated Press interview. "Quincy was a muckraker, like Upton Sinclair, who wrote about injustices. He was my ideal as a youngster, my author, my hero."

"Everybody said, 'Quincy' will never be a hit.' I said, 'You guys are wrong. He's two heroes in one, a cop and a doctor.' A coroner has power. He can tell the police commissioner to investigate a murder. I saw the opportunity to do what I'd gotten into the theater to do—give a message."

"They were going to do cops and robbers with 'Quincy.' I said, 'You promised me I could do causes.' They said, 'Nobody wants to see that.' I said, 'Look at the success of '60 Minutes.' They want to see it if you present it as entertainment."

For his 1987 role as 81-year-old Nat in the Broadway production of "I'm Not Rappaport," Klugman wore leg weights to learn to shuffle like an elderly man. He said he would wear them for an hour before each performance "to remember to keep that shuffle."

"The guy is so vital emotionally, but physically he can't be," Klugman said. "We treat old people so badly. There is nothing easy about 80."

The son of Russian Jewish immigrants, he was born in Philadelphia and began acting in college at Carnegie Institute of Technology. After serving in the Army during World War II, he went on to summer stock and off-Broadway, rooming with fellow actor Charles Bronson as both looked for paying jobs. He made his Broadway debut in 1952 in a revival of "Golden Boy."

His film credits included Sidney Lumet's "12 Angry Men" and Blake Edwards' "Days of Wine and Roses" and an early television highlight was appearing with Humphrey Bogart and Henry Fonda in a production of "The Petrified Forest." His performance in

the classic 1959 musical "Gypsy" brought him a Tony nomination for best featured (supporting) actor in a musical.

He also appeared in several episodes of "The Twilight Zone," including a memorable 1963 one in which he played a negligent father whose son is seriously wounded in Vietnam. His other TV shows included "The Defenders" and the soap opera "The Greatest Gift."

Throat cancer took away his raspy voice for several years in the 1980s. When he was back on the stage for a 1993 revival of "Three Men on a Horse," the AP's review said, "His voice may be a little scratchy but his timing is as impeccable as ever."

"The only really stupid thing I ever did in my life was to start smoking," he said in 1996. Seeing people smoking in television and films "disgusts me, it makes me so angry—kids are watching," he said.

In his later years, he guest-starred on TV series including "Third Watch" and "Crossing Jordan" and appeared in a 2010 theatrical film, "Camera Obscura."

Klugman's hobby was horse racing and he eventually took up raising them, too.

"I always loved to gamble," he said. "I never got close to a horse. Fate dealt me a terrible blow when it gave me a good horse the first time out. I thought how easy this is."

"Now I love being around them."

A horse Klugman co-owned, Jacklin Klugman, finished third in 1980's Kentucky Derby and fourth in that year's Preakness Stakes.

Klugman's wife, actress-comedian Brett Somers, played his ex-wife, Blanche, in the "Odd Couple" series. The couple, who married in 1953 and had two sons, Adam and David, had been estranged for years by the time of her death in 2007.

In February 2008, at age 85, Klugman married longtime girlfriend Peggy Crosby, who was by his side when he died Monday.

His attorney Larry Larson wrote in an email that Klugman is also survived by two grandchildren and that memorial services have not been set.

## Holiday music stops at Irving Berlin's NY door

**NEW YORK (AP)—**A caroling group that for 35 years has performed the Irving Berlin classic "White Christmas" on Christmas Eve outside the New York City home where he lived has cancelled the tradition.

A group spokesman says the plans were abruptly cancelled last week for lack of space at the Manhattan home, which now serves as the Luxembourg consulate.

The tradition started in the

late 1970s with one cabaret singer outside the home. In 1983, Berlin invited the singers inside for cocoa and cookies.

Berlin died in 1989 at age 99.

Luxembourg Consul-General Jean-Claude Knebler tells the New York Post the ballroom where the group performed is filled with office equipment because the consulate expanded. He says he hopes the tradition resumes in another year in the consulate's library.

## 'Hobbit' holds on at \$36.9M, 'Reacher' does \$15.6M

**LOS ANGELES (AP)—**"The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey" easily defended its box-office title, remaining the No. 1 film for a second weekend with \$36.9 million.

A rush of newcomers mostly had modest openings, led by Tom Cruise's action tale "Jack Reacher" at No. 2 with \$15.6 million.

The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Hollywood.com are:

1. **"The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey,"** Warner Bros., \$36,940,000, 4,100 locations, \$9,010 average, \$150,093,000, two weeks.
2. **"Jack Reacher,"** Paramount, \$15,600,000, 3,352 locations, \$4,654 average, \$15,600,000, one week.
3. **"This Is 40,"** Universal, \$12,030,690, 2,913 locations, \$4,130 average, \$12,030,690, one week.
4. **"Rise of the Guardians,"** Paramount, \$5,900,000, 3,031 locations, \$1,947

5. **"Lincoln,"** Disney, \$5,525,774, 2,293 locations, \$2,410 average, \$116,673,598, seven weeks.
6. **"The Guilt Trip,"** Paramount, \$5,390,000, 2,431 locations, \$2,217 average, \$7,421,000, one week.
7. **"Monsters, Inc.,"** in 3-D, Disney, \$4,774,686, 2,618 locations, \$1,824 average, \$6,259,667, one week.
8. **"Skyfall,"** Sony, \$4,700,000, 2,365 locations, \$1,987 average, \$279,972,000, seven weeks.
9. **"Life of Pi,"** Fox, \$4,017,237, 1,750 locations, \$2,296 average, \$76,373,481, five weeks.
10. **"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn—Part 2,"** Summit, \$2,626,955, 2,000 locations, \$1,313 average, \$281,632,689, six weeks.
11. **"Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away,"** Paramount, \$2,135,000, 840 locations, \$2,542 average, \$2,254,000, one week.
12. **"Wreck-It Ralph,"** Disney, \$1,819,036, 1,444 locations, \$1,260 average, \$171,741,561, eight

13. **"Silver Linings Playbook,"** Weinstein Co., \$1,781,196, 371 locations, \$4,801 average, \$19,861,238, six weeks.
14. **"Dabangg 2,"** Eros International, \$1,019,213, 166 locations, \$6,140 average, \$1,019,213, one week.
15. **"Argo,"** Warner Bros., \$903,000, 450 locations, \$2,007 average, \$106,439,000, 11 weeks.
16. **"Red Dawn,"** Film District, \$794,880, 1,011 locations, \$786 average, \$42,626,783, five weeks.
17. **"Flight,"** Paramount, \$709,000, 742 locations, \$956 average, \$90,989,000, eight weeks.
18. **"Anna Karenina,"** Focus, \$667,669, 331 locations, \$2,017 average, \$9,645,583, six weeks.
19. **"Hitchcock,"** Fox Searchlight, \$579,676, 535 locations, \$1,084 average, \$4,194,968, five weeks.
20. **"Playing for Keeps,"** Film District, \$424,105, 851 locations, \$498 average, \$12,410,463, three weeks.

# 'Parental Guidance' unites Crystal, Midler

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—After nearly 30 years of friendship and shared tastes in movies, music and comedy, Billy Crystal and Bette Midler have finally taken it to the next level: They did a film together.

The two veteran entertainers first met on the comedy circuit, but never actually worked together until "Parental Guidance," in theaters Christmas Day.

"He says we met in the '60s at the Improv, and of course I don't remember any of that because I was going so fast," Midler said in a recent interview.

Crystal and Midler share the screen for the first time in the family film, playing a married couple who bumble their way along to bonding with their grandchildren. Marisa Tomei stars as their Type-A daughter, who regrets having to entrust her three kids to "the other grandparents" during a business trip with her husband when her in-laws aren't available.

The idea for the movie came from Crystal's real-life experience caring for his own granddaughters, now ages 6 and 9. He and wife Janice were confounded by the "pages and pages" of rules their daughter left behind. (That daughter, actress Jennifer Crystal Foley, plays a small role in the film.)



In this Saturday, Dec. 15, 2012 photo, Billy Crystal, left, and Bette Midler, cast members in the film "Parental Guidance," pose together for a portrait at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Los Angeles. AP

"We had them for six days all alone, and on the seventh day I rested," said Crystal, 64. "And I came into the office and started writing the story of grandparents who have to babysit for their kids while they go away."

Midler found the script just as she was looking for a family-film project, and she immediately connected with the humor and warmth of the story.

"I wanted to do something that everybody could come and see, because that's what I grew up with," she said.

"It came at a really good point in our lives and our careers to finally find each other and be able to share the responsibilities for the movie together and our scenes," Crystal said. "She's an old pro, in the best of ways."

Take out old, she's a pro. And very giving, very funny, and very willing to try anything."

Except sing. Crystal said the Oscar-nominated and Tony-winning star was reluctant to perform a sweet song-and-dance number with him in the film.

"The only time I ever had to wrestle her was on singing the song. She didn't want to do it," he said. "(She said,) 'No, then they'll say Bette Midler is singing a song.' And I say, 'No, we won't sing great. We'll sing good, but we'll sing like parents, and we'll sing together.'"

Their rendition of the Monotones' 1958 doo-wop classic "The Book of Love" is among the film's highlights.

"They kind of talked me into

it, and I'm glad that we did it. It worked out," said Midler, 67. "It's wonderful music and maybe people will go look up the Monotones and see how fabulous they are."

Crystal, also a producer of the film, said he uses movies and performing as a means of working through significant chapters of his life. The film "City Slickers" was about him turning 40. His one-man show, "700 Sundays," is about losing his parents.

"And then this one is about grandparenting," he said. "I shudder to think what the next one's about."

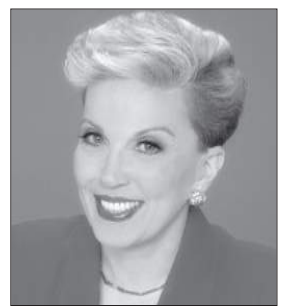
(Actually, he already knows: He's working on a yet-untitled book of essays—"a man's approach to aging"—due out in October.)

Midler, who described herself as "just a player for hire" on "Parental Guidance," said she admires Crystal's sensibilities, and it was fun to finally work with her friend.

"I like to see people at their peak, people doing their best work and really working hard and bringing things to fruition. It's just fantastic," she said. "It's a hopeful picture, and I like that about him. I like the fact that he has that mentality. So to watch him in action is really a lot of fun."

## Wife has a few choice words on man's love for sexy lips

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



*Dear Abby*

**DEAR ABBY:** Please help save my marriage. My wife of five years discovered an Internet browser history of 13 Web pages I had clicked on the previous day. The pages were of women's sexy lips. My wife is calling it "porn" and a "gateway to porn." I feel guilty about it, but I told her it isn't pornography. I think it's a fetish. She says I'm using that word to get off the hook.

Will you please tell her that this probably is a fetish? Our sex life has not been the same since she discovered the images on the computer. What can we do about it in a way that will strengthen our marriage?

NOT GUILTY AS CHARGED

**DEAR NOT GUILTY:** It's a shame you and your wife hadn't discussed what turns you on before she checked your browser history. A fetish is any object that turns someone on, and it can range from large breasts, to stiletto heels, to leather or rubber items of clothing, to full red lips. It is NOT pornography.

A way to strengthen your marriage would be for you to buy her a tube of bright red lipstick. And a way for her to improve your sex life would be to put it on.

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a 13-year-old girl with a sister and a brother. I was recently told by my dad that I have to teach my brother how to read, but the problem is he has a learning disability and a behavior disorder. I don't know how I'm supposed to teach him to read, and it scares me.

On top of that, my dad got mad at my sister and me and said that when we were younger we were just like my brother, only worse. He said he was close to giving up on us. Sometimes Dad says we're worthless, stupid and asks why we're even in this world. He says we're not good for anything.

I have a slight form of autism, so I'm sort of slow doing certain things other kids do at my age. I feel like I'll never be as smart as anyone else, and I have no clue how I'm going to teach my disabled brother to read. Help!

LOST, ALONE AND WORRIED IN URBANA, ILL.

**DEAR LOST:** It would be wonderful if you could teach your learning disabled brother how to read, but you are not equipped to do that. Your brother should be in a special education class with a teacher who has the specialized training—and, possibly, a tutor.

Sometimes, when parents are extremely stressed or angry they can say things they don't mean without thinking of the lasting effect their words can have on a child. You are neither worthless nor stupid. You are an intelligent girl. Frankly, your father appears to be in need of some help, and I hope you will share with a counselor at your school what you have told me.

**DEAR ABBY:** My 13-year-old son is refusing to wear a bicycle helmet because he has decided it's "uncool." My husband and I have always worn them, but here in Texas many people don't. There's no state law requiring it.

I know how devastating the effects of a head injury can be and I want to prevent my son from getting one. How can I help my teenager see that protecting his brain is more important than looking "cool" to his friends who don't wear them? My son insists I am ... AN OVERPROTECTIVE MOM

**DEAR OVERPROTECTIVE MOM:** Contact your son's pediatrician and ask if he or she can facilitate a tour of a rehabilitation facility that treats people with traumatic brain injuries. If that doesn't convince your son, nothing will.

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

*What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

## Thousands sign US petition to deport Piers Morgan

**LONDON (AP)**—Tens of thousands of people have signed a petition calling for British CNN host Piers Morgan to be deported from the U.S. over his gun control views.

Morgan has taken an aggressive stand for tighter U.S. gun laws in the wake of the Newtown, Connecticut, school shooting. Last week, he called a gun advocate appearing on his "Piers Morgan Tonight" show an "unbelievably stupid man."

Now, gun rights activists are fighting back. A petition created Dec. 21 on the White House e-petition website by a user in Texas accuses Morgan of engaging in a "hostile attack against the U.S. Constitution" by targeting the Second Amendment. It demands he be deported immediately for



In this Dec. 20, 2011 file photo, Piers Morgan, host of CNN's "Piers Morgan Tonight," leaves the CNN building in Los Angeles. AP

"exploiting his position as a national network television host to stage attacks against the rights of American citizens."

The petition has already hit the 25,000 signature threshold to get a White House response. By Monday, it had 31,813 signatures.

Morgan seemed unfazed—and even amused—by the movement. In a series of Twitter messages, he alternately urged his followers to sign the petition and in response to one article about the petition said "bring it on" as he appeared to track the petition's progress.

"If I do get deported from America for wanting fewer gun murders, are there any other countries that will have me?" he wrote.

## Bethenny Frankel and husband of 2 years separating

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Bethenny Frankel and husband Jason Hoppy are separating. The 42-year-old TV personality, chef, author and entrepreneur told The Associated Press Sunday that the split brings her "great sadness."

"This was an extremely difficult decision that as a woman and a mother, I have to accept as the best choice for our family," Frankel said. "We have love and respect for one another and will continue to amicably co-parent our daughter who is and will always remain our first priority. This is an immensely painful and heartbreaking time for us."

Frankel and Hoppy were mar-



In this March 17, 2011 file photo, reality TV personality Bethenny Frankel poses for a portrait in New York. AP

ried in 2010 and have a daughter, Bryn, who was born that same year. The couple's courtship and marriage were documented in two reality series, "Bethenny Getting Married?" and "Bethenny Ever After..." Frankel gained fame as a star of "The Real Housewives of New York City." Since her stint on the Bravo show, she has written four books, released a fitness video and founded her Skinny-girl line of cocktails, shapewear and nutritional supplements.

She launched a talk show, "Bethenny," over the summer that is set to air nationally on Fox stations in 2013.



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# Colts, Bengals make playoffs with wins

By BARRY WILNER  
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



One year after putting together the NFL's worst record, the Indianapolis Colts are headed to the playoffs.

Joining them on Sunday were the Cincinnati Bengals, finishing out the field in the AFC.

The Colts (10-5) equaled the 2008 Miami Dolphins as the only teams to win at least 10 games after losing 14 or more the previous season. Top overall draft pick Andrew Luck completed a 7-yard touchdown pass to Reggie Wayne late in the fourth quarter for a 20-13 victory at Kansas City.

Cincinnati qualified for a second straight postseason berth for only the second time in franchise history, edging archrival Pittsburgh 13-10. The Bengals have never gone to the playoffs in successive years that did not involve a strike-shortened season.

Luck finished with 205 yards passing to break Cam Newton's year-old rookie record of 4,051 yards in a season. He also extended his rookie record for fourth-quarter comebacks to seven by leading his team downfield in the closing minutes.

"Mission accomplished. That's all I can say," Colts interim coach Bruce Arians said. "Without getting emotional again, knowing that (coach Chuck Pagano) is going to be back Monday, the work week shouldn't be as stressful."

Pagano has been sidelined since a loss to Jacksonville in Week 3.

For the Bengals (9-6), Andy Dalton hit A.J. Green with a 21-yard pass in the final moments, setting up Josh Brown's 43-yard field goal with 4 seconds remaining. The loss eliminated the Steelers from contention.

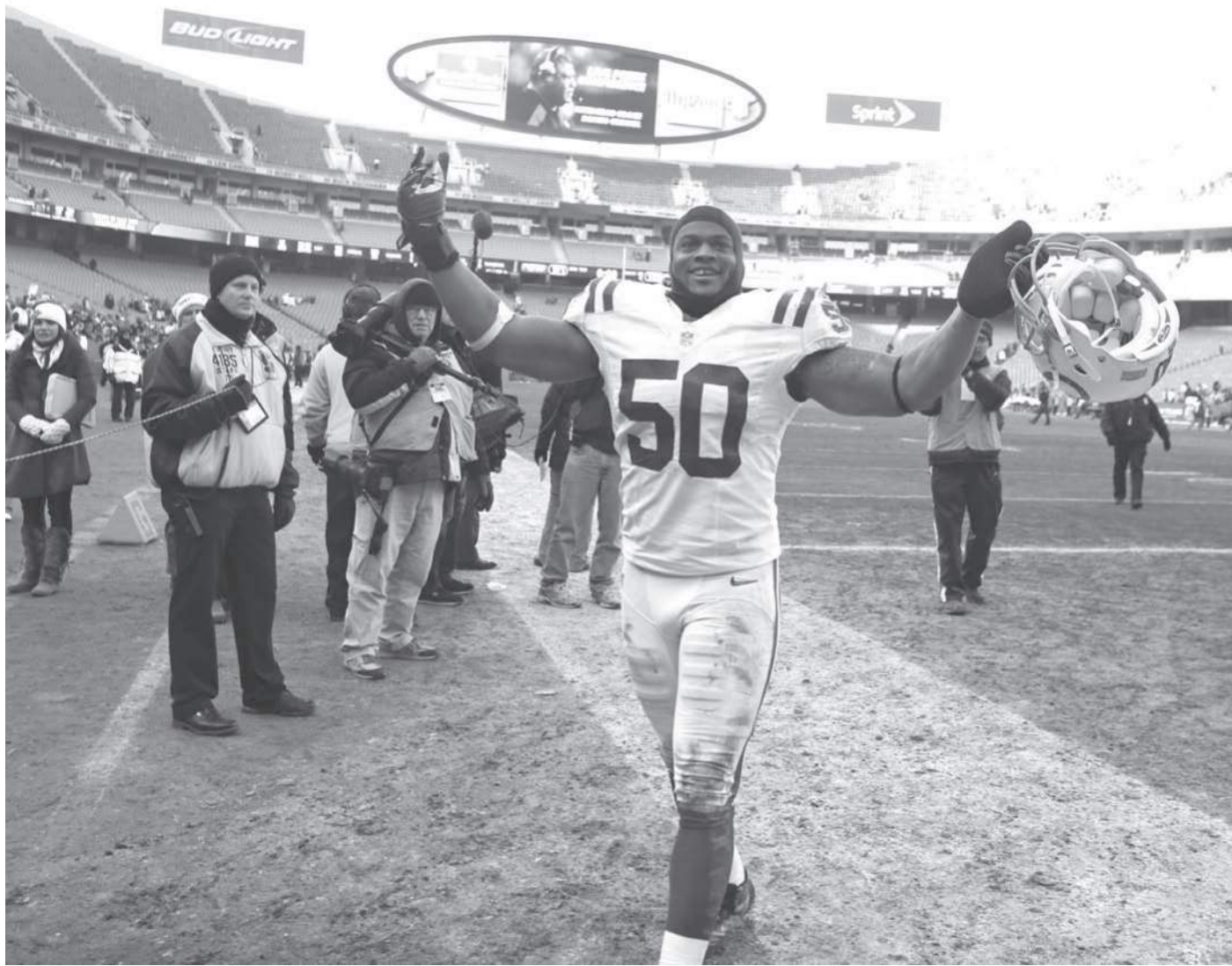
"A lot of people talked about we hadn't been in in back-to-back seasons in 30 years," Green said. "I don't worry about that stuff. I've been here two years and we made the playoffs all two years. That's all we can control."

Minnesota's 23-6 win at Houston prevented the Texans from earning home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs. AFC South champion Houston (12-3) still can get that by winning at Indianapolis in the season finale.

New England has won the AFC East, Denver the West. Baltimore clinched the North by beating the New York Giants 33-14, sending the defending Super Bowl champions to the brink of elimination.

Washington's 27-20 win at Philadelphia, combined with New Orleans beating Dallas 34-31 in overtime means the Redskins (9-6) will win the NFC East by beating the Cowboys next week.

But Dallas (8-7) takes the di-



Indianapolis Colts inside linebacker Jerrell Freeman celebrates as he walks off the field after an NFL football game against the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday, Dec. 23, 2012, in Kansas City, Mo.

vision by winning that game at Washington, which the league

has flexed to prime time.

"They know what it means,"

coach Mike Shanahan said.

"They've been working toward

this opportunity to win the division. Any time you win the

## Ryan says Tebow would have done wildcat if asked

NEW YORK (AP)—Tim Tebow would have done whatever Rex Ryan asked—if the New York Jets coach had asked him.

Ryan acknowledged Monday that Tebow wasn't happy when the coach chose Greg McElroy to start for the benched Mark Sanchez, but insisted Tebow was willing to play in any role Sunday against San Diego—including the wildcat.

"He was disappointed, there's no question," Ryan said Monday. "He was disappointed that he was not named the starter, but with that being said, I'm not going to get into private conversations that I have with players, but it was my decision to use Jeremy Kerley in the wildcat, without question."

"But I'll say this: I believe if Tim's number was called, he would've went in and played. I don't think there's any doubt about that."

A person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press that Tebow asked out of his wildcat offense duties last week after hearing that McElroy, the third-stringer, would get his first NFL start over Tebow, listed as the No. 2 quarterback.

Another person, also familiar with the situation, said that wildcat plays involving Kerley instead of Tebow were added before practice last Wednesday.

Both people spoke on condition of anonymity because the



New York Jets quarterbacks Mark Sanchez, left, and Tim Tebow stand next to each other during the second half of an NFL football game against the San Diego Chargers, Sunday, Dec. 23, 2012, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Jets do not disclose personnel discussions.

ESPN New York first reported that Tebow opted out of running wildcat plays. ESPN also reported that Tebow said his relationship with Ryan was "strained" for a few days, but they smoothed things over. Ryan had all three quarterbacks active for Sunday's 27-17 loss, but Tebow never got onto the field in any capacity.

Ryan did not deny that Tebow asked out of running wildcat plays, but also refused to go into any details of what happened.

"I've been transparent and all that stuff without question, but I'm not going to give you a private conversation that I

would have with a player," Ryan reiterated. "That's between him and I. If he wants to share whatever the conversation is, Tim or anybody else, then that's up to him."

Ryan was also asked if it could be considered "insubordination" if a player refuses to play in a role designed for him.

"You guys are assuming something's a fact or whatever, and that's fine," Ryan said. "If I would have asked Tim to play in anything, Tim would have gone into the game and done that."

After the game, Tebow would say only that "it just happened" that he didn't play in the wildcat package. He has done his best to hide his frustration throughout

what he could consider a lost year on the playing field.

"Well, it's been disappointing," Tebow said of the season. "Obviously, it didn't go as we thought, as I had hoped, but sometimes in life you have that. Sometimes you have setbacks and you just have to look at them as another opportunity for you to step back up and keep working and figure out what to do."

New York will either trade or release Tebow after the season, a disappointing and frustrating one-year stint with the Jets that just seems to get worse. Tebow was asked after the game if he could remember the last time he had played so little.

"Three or 4 years old, probably," Tebow said. "Since I started."

Tebow has not played a single snap in four of the last five games, although some of that inactivity was due to him breaking two ribs at Seattle on Nov. 11. He has been cleared to play, and got a full offensive series at quarterback last Monday night at Tennessee, but Ryan confirmed that Tebow "still has two cracked ribs."

The Jets (6-9) were eliminated last week with their loss to the Titans, and Ryan announced after the game against San Diego that McElroy—despite being sacked 11 times—would start in the season finale at Buf-

division, everybody knows you have a home game in the playoffs. We talked about that from Day 1. They knew what we had to do to get there. We haven't accomplished anything yet."

Green Bay clinched at least the third seed in the NFC when it routed Tennessee 55-7. The NFC North champs (11-4) still could wind up second overall in the conference and get a bye and moved into the No. 2 slot when Seattle romped over San Francisco 42-13.

"We have momentum going for us, particularly what we've done over the last nine weeks, 10 weeks," coach Mike McCarthy said of Green Bay's nine wins in the last 10 games. "So we wanted to take the next step as a football team and I felt we were able to accomplish that today."

The 49ers (10-4-1) will win the NFC West by beating Arizona next weekend. Seattle (10-5) earned at least a wild-card spot and finishes at home against St. Louis.

On Saturday night, NFC South winner Atlanta won 31-18 at Detroit to clinch home-field advantage throughout the conference playoffs.

Minnesota (9-6), Chicago (9-6), the New York Giants (8-7) and Washington could wind up with the final NFC wild card. Dallas can't get a wild card.

falo. Whether Tebow actually plays in that game or has taken his last snap with the Jets remains to be seen.

Tebow was acquired from Denver in a stunning trade last March and expected to be a major contributor to the offense. He has been only a role player—whenever he actually plays.

"I thought we'd do some better things out of that wildcat," Ryan said. "It hasn't happened. I'm not blaming it on Tim Tebow. I'm sure there's multiple reasons, but for whatever reason, it has not had the results that I envisioned for it."

Some reports have Jacksonville interested in bringing Tebow in to compete for its quarterback job next season. The Jaguars were the only team other than the Jets that tried to trade for Tebow last year, plus it would be a homecoming for Tebow if he played in Jacksonville.

"I'm not pulling the tampering thing," Ryan said. "Tim's under contract with us and that's all I know."

Jaguars coach Mike Mularkey told Jacksonville reporters that he wasn't aware of reports that his team looked into pursuing Tebow before the trade deadline earlier this season.

"I am not going to talk about that," he added. "I don't talk about other players on other teams right now."

# Plenty of intrigue on NBA's Christmas schedule

**TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER



The NBA's hottest team will be playing at home in Los Angeles, and it's the Clippers, not the Lakers. There's a finals rematch in Miami, a holiday matinee in Brooklyn, Kobe vs. the Knicks and the 20th anniversary of one of Michael Jordan's most memorable games in Chicago.

Welcome to Christmas, NBA style.

A five-game slate makes up the NBA's Christmas schedule, which this year comes with the additional bonus of not being the first day back after a lockout forced the cancellation of the opening portion of last season.

Schedule-makers set the matchups long ago, and the league always tries to get some marquee meetings.

This year, they pretty much struck gold.

The Clippers are riding a franchise-record 13-game winning streak. The New York Knicks will face their former coach, Mike D'Antoni, when they play the Lakers. Miami and Oklahoma City will be bringing the best records in their respective conferences into their first matchup since the Heat won the title. And Brooklyn and Boston face off, a few weeks after the teams started shoving one another and firing off some insults afterward.

"I don't know how much bad blood is still there," Nets guard Deron Williams told reporters Monday. "We beat them twice this year. I know they're aware of that and they'll come in ready to play."

On Christmas, that's the case with everybody.

## Source: Swisher, Tribe reach \$56M, 4-year deal



**CLEVELAND**  
(AP)—The Indians' pitch to bring Nick Swisher "home" worked.

Two people familiar with the negotiations said Swisher has agreed to a \$56 million, four-year contract with the Indians, who used the free agent outfielder's deep Ohio connections to convince him to join the club. The people spoke on condition of anonymity Sunday because Swisher must take a physical before the deal can be finalized. The Indians are expected to announce Swisher's signing after Christmas, one of the people said.

The Indians will not comment until Swisher completes his physical.

"Wow! What a crazy few weeks," Swisher said on Twitter. "Hey Cleveland! Are you ready? Because I'm coming home!"

Swisher's deal includes a \$14 million option for 2017 that could become guaranteed based on plate appearances the previous year.

Indians second baseman Jason Kipnis was excited about the club's newest addition.

"Welcome to the Tribe (at)nick-swisher, pumped to get ya," Kipnis tweeted. The 32-year-old Swisher spent the last four seasons with the New York Yankees, taking advantage of the short right-field porch at Yankee Stadium. A switch-hitter, Swisher hit .272 this season with 24 homers and 93 RBIs.

Swisher will fill an outfield hole for the Indians, who traded Shin-Soo Choo to Cincinnati. Swisher will play right, with recently acquired Drew Stubbs likely taking over in center with Michael Brantley shifting from center to left field.

Swisher, who was born in Columbus and played at Ohio State, visited the Indians earlier in the week. The club used Swisher's ties with the Buckeyes to convince him to join a team that won just 68 games last season following an historic collapse in August.

During his tour of Progressive Field, Swisher watched a video presentation on the stadium's giant scoreboard that featured messages from current Ohio State football coach Urban Meyer and basketball coach Thad Matta, who urged him to sign with the Indians. Later, Swisher and his wife, actress JoAnna Garcia, had lunch with former Ohio State coach Jim Tressel, who was at the school when Swisher played there.

Swisher's signing is a significant win for the Indians, who have been in the market for an outfielder throughout the offseason. During the winter meetings in Nashville, Tenn., they offered Shane Victorino a \$44 million, four-year contract before he agreed to a \$39 million, three-year deal with Boston.

Seattle, Texas and Boston were believed to be interested in Swisher, an All-Star in 2010 who was regarded as the second-best free agent hitter this offseason behind Josh Hamilton. The Indians have been desperate to add power and Swisher, who has hit at least 22 homers in each of the past seven seasons, will bolster the middle of new manager Terry Francona's lineup.

Swisher's value may have been damaged by several poor postseasons with the Yankees. He batted .162 in the postseason for New York with seven RBIs and 38 strikeouts in 130 at-bats.

Swisher spent four seasons with Oakland and one with the Chicago White Sox before joining the Yankees.

The Indians will lose their second-round pick in next year's amateur draft as compensation for signing Swisher, and the Yankees will get an extra selection following the first round.

It's been a busy offseason for Indians general manager Chris Antonetti, who is trying to fix a team that has lost at least 93 games in three of the past four seasons.

Antonetti fired manager Manny Acta and replaced him with Francona, the former Boston manager who has spent the past few weeks meeting with his new players. Antonetti also signed free agent first baseman Mark Reynolds and was part of a three-team, nine-player deal that sent Choo to the Reds for Stubbs and brought Cleveland prized pitching prospect Trevor Bauer from Arizona. The signing of Swisher will take some pressure of Antonetti, who has been criticized by fans for several moves in recent years.

His agreement was first reported by the New York Daily News.

Now that they've landed Swisher, the Indians are expected to focus on improving their starting pitching. The club agreed to terms with left-hander Scott Kazmir to a minor league deal this week, pending a physical. The Indians still need to add a designated hitter and there remains interest in Travis Hafner, who was limited to just 66 games last season because of injuries and remains an unsigned free agent.



Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade celebrates after scoring against the Minnesota Timberwolves during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012, in Miami. AP

"There's nothing like playing on Christmas," Knicks star Carmelo Anthony said.

Los Angeles will be the center of the league's Christmas bash, with two games at Staples Center on the same day, including an opener that features two teams which got off to surprising starts in very different ways.

The Knicks—with an Eastern Conference-leading 20 wins so far—venture out to play Kobe Bryant and the Los Angeles Lakers, who reworked their roster over the summer and reworked their coaching staff after a slow early start, firing Mike Brown and bringing in D'Antoni.

It's the 48th time playing on Christmas for the Knicks, but only the eighth time on the road.

"When we were younger, watching the Christmas Day games was always special," Knicks forward Steve Novak said in a video posted to the team's website. "We know we can't play basketball forever, so for this time in our life, to be away from our families and be able to play on TV on Christmas Day is really special."

Finish that game, clear the court, and

basketball fans in Los Angeles then get a second present—the NBA's best team of late. The Clippers, winners of a franchise-record 13 straight, close the five-pack of games against the Denver Nuggets. For the Clippers, it will be only the fourth Christmas home game in franchise history. For comparison's sake, Bryant will be playing on the holiday for the 15th time, and this will be his 12th time doing so at home.

"It will be a good challenge for us," Denver forward Danilo Gallinari told reporters when asked about facing the Clippers. "And we'll be ready for them."

So after Boston-Brooklyn, Knicks-Lakers and Thunder-Heat comes the fourth game of the day when Houston goes to Chicago, exactly 20 years after Jordan put up a Christmas show of his own with a 42-point, eight-rebound effort to lift the Bulls over New York 89-77.

Derrick Rose remains out for the Bulls, of course, but there is one reunion to take note of—it'll be Omer Asik's first time playing in Chicago since he joined the Rockets this past offseason.

And that sets the table for the nightcap, when the Nuggets meet the Clippers.

Maybe the best matchup of all comes in Miami, where the Thunder meet the Heat in what's sure to be an emotionally charged day. First, it's a finals rematch. Secondly, the teams will also pay tribute to military families by handing out gifts to children on the court immediately before the game, and both clubs will wear ribbons to honor those who were killed in the school shooting in Newtown, Conn., earlier this month.

Several Heat players, including LeBron James and Dwyane Wade, said that playing on Christmas is difficult because of their desire for family time.

At the same time, both also said it's an honor—especially so as the league's reigning champions.

"I think it's great for the fans, having those games," James said. "But for us, as family men, Christmas is a day that we would love to spend with our family and be home with our family. I have no problem with the game as scheduled. I love to play the game, I love to play basketball so I'm going to be out there and I'm going to be excited for it."

# Roach thinks Pacquiao should return to ring in September

**MANILA, Philippines** — Not in April, but in September.

That’s when trainer Freddie Roach thinks pound-for-pound champion Manny Pacquiao should return to the ring, after suffering a brutal knockout in the hands of Juan Manuel Marquez earlier this month.

“[April] is too soon after [a knockout like that],” Roach was quoted by 710 radio, according to BoxingScene.com.

“We spoke about [his next fight]. I told him that I think he should come back around September and he agreed with me.”

Pacquiao got knocked out cold by Marquez, using a bril-



Juan Manuel Marquez, left, and Manny Pacquiao exchange punches during their Dec. 9 bout in Las Vegas, Nevada.

## TEAM FOUR

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Only Jan Travilla nailed a basket for Team Go So Hard in the third frame, while Swerve logged 14. Lily Williams and Nicole Lebria, who is back on island for the holidays, drilled one triple apiece and got support from two other teammates in the third-quarter breakaway.

Nicole Lebria top-scored for Swerve with her 12 points, while

Williams and Madi Alegre contributed 11 and 10, respectively. Nicole Lebria announced her return to local women’s basketball scene with a 6-point production in the first period, which ended with Swerve hanging on to a shaky 11-10 advantage.

Nicole’s younger sister, Kaylani, then took over in the second period, connecting on two triples to widen the gap at the break. After keeping pace with Swerve in the first 10 minutes of play, Team Go So Hard strug-

gled in the second canto, making only 6 points to face a double-digit deficit at halftime and it never made headway in the second half to drop its opener.

Ira Palero led Team Go So Hard’s losing cause with her 23 points.

### First Game

**Team Four 65** – Abrams 28, Ocampo 14, Castillo 12, Samson 7, Badilles 4, Sapong 2.

**Air Apparent 57** – Pagarao 17, Guevarra 13, Javier 13, San-

tiago 6, Ito 6, Gatchalian 4, Padilla 2, Mendoza 2, De Leon 2.

**Scoring by quarters:** 20-7, 36-20, 51-35, 65-57.

### Second Game

**Swerve 52** – N. Lebria 12, Williams 11, Alegre 10, K. Lebría 8, Reyes 7, Pena 2.

**Team So Hard 34** – I. Palero 22, Travilla 8, J. Palero 2, Cristobal 2.

**Scoring by quarters:** 11-10, 28-16, 42-18, 52-34. *(Saipan Tribune)*

## JONES

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Day 2 performance during the awards banquet held on Dec. 16 at the Saipan World Resort.

Jones bagged a pair of birdies during both rounds, while Joe Tudela matched her feat on the

second day.

Joe Sablan Jr. received a pair of “most par” awards for recording eight pars on both days, while Babauta and Jones shared the feat after each jotted a seven-par round over the weekend. Last but not the least, Ben Jones Jr., who is known for utilizing one-handed putting

technique, was hailed as the “least putt” winner.

Other golfers who joined the two-day event were Terry Guerrero (149), Ben Jones Jr. (149), Yamagishi (150), Joe Sablan Jr. (154), Joe Tudela (156), Frank Guerrero (157), Frank Sablan (163), Felix Sasamoto (169), and Ben Jones Jr. (169).

Amigo officials would like to extend appreciation to all their members for their continued co-operation, commitment and dedication. The club will kick off its 2013 season later next month. For more information, contact John Guerrero at 287-6352, Joe Sablan Jr. at 322-1177 or Lorraine Babauta at 989-7732.

## NAKAMURA

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Olopai and Saures.

“This is my third placing and second event win. It feels great and it makes me want to play even more,” Nakamura said in a telephone interview with *Saipan Tribune* last Monday.

With the RGA Cup on his belt, Nakamura is looking to join more tournaments next sea-

son, including the prestigious Tournament of Champions.

Nakamura officially joined RGA in November 2011, shortly after landing a job at COP and has since developed some nice skills both in the tee box and on the greens. He credits his significant improvement in the sport to his ability in smashing long drives. He also reverts to his trusty putter, which he put to good use in bagging his big win this season by sinking a 40-foot

putt on hole No. 9.

Joining Nakamura in the Top 3 of the club championship held on Dec. 16 were Jordon Kosam, who had a net 68 (41/42) and Ray Tigilau, who fired a net 69 (43/41). Notably, fifth placer Ki Soo Kim finished with a field-low gross card of 79 (41/38), one stroke ahead of fourth finisher Olopai (40/40), however both settled for net scores of 71.

Other awardees included Kosam and Joe Limes, who

each won \$25 closest to the pin prizes. Kosam earned the nod on holes No. 3 and 14, while Limes took holes No. 7 and 12.

Twelve monthly Ace winners competed for the RGA Cup.

Meanwhile, the club’s 2013 season will start on Jan. 12 with the staging of its January qualifying tournament. For more information, contact Saures at 483-5506 or Kosam at 483-4506 or email cnmirga@gmail.com.

## CT KINGS

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scoring for the CT Kings with the former nailing two triples and finishing the first period with 8 markers, and the latter adding 5 to give their team a 20-10 lead.

Basa was still on target in the second canto, canning three more triples and scoring 8 straight markers in the closing minutes of that period, as the CT Kings protected the double-digit advantage at the break, 38-27.

The defending champion trailed early, as only Jun Estolas got his game going, wrapping up at the first half with 11 markers, still 8 points short of Basa’s output after 20 minutes of play.

The Basa show continued in the second half, as he opened the third period with a triple and the rest of his teammates also found it easier to make baskets, as Pacific Stars seemed out of sync both on offense and defense.

The second game was a different story, as Saipan TV battled from behind to take a 72-63 win over QQ Rent A Car.

QQ despite its depleted crew opened a 24-16 advantage after the first period behind Rodney Catalla’s two triples and 8 points. QQ played with only six players in the opening canto before getting two more in the remainder of the match, but it lost the lead and the game eventually, as Saipan TV’s backcourt tandem of Bernard Aquino and Brandon

Talanía teamed up with bruiser Tim Wesley in the come-from-behind victory.

The Saipan TV trio combined for 52 points with Aquino notching 9 points and Wesley chipping in 6 in the second canto to put their team on top at the break, 37-34. Wesley and company then stretched the lead to 9 in the third, 55-46, as they successfully fished for fouls and earned 10 of their 18 points from the stripe.

QQ never recovered from thereon, as it had no player scoring in streak in the playoff canto and only Jorge De Guzman finished in twin digits with his 10 points.

Wesley paced Saipan TV with 19 markers, Aquino added 18, and Talania and Jun Alipio contributed 15 and 11, respectively.

### First Game

**CT Kings 82** – Basa 36, Lizama 12, Teregeyo 8, Acosta 7, Zapanta 6, Avila 6, Pua 2, Solito 2.

**Pacific Stars/Gualo Rai 60** – Estolas 24, Gomez 10, Diaz 8, Tenorio 7, Lauron 5, Dayrit 2.

**Scoring by quarters:** 20-10, 38-27, 60-50, 82-60.

### Second Game

**Saipan TV 72** – Wesley 19, Aquino 18, Talania 15, Alipio 11, Umali 3, Reyes 2, Mariano 2, Anasan 2.

**QQ Rent A Car 63** – De Guzman 10, Gamboa 9, Camacho 9, Lisua 9, Catalla 8, Taylor 7, Hambros 6.

**Scoring by quarters:** 16-24, 37-34, 55-46, 72-63. *(Saipan Tribune)*

liant right, in the sixth round of their fourth fight last December 9 at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

But the Filipino boxing champion, though, remains upbeat even after the stunning loss, according to Roach.

“Manny told him [Roach] if he thought he couldn’t lose, he would be in the wrong business,” relayed Sports Illustrated’s Chris Mannix in a tweet.

Meanwhile, Roach denies saying that Marquez used performance enhancing drugs to bulk up.

In an interview with Boxing scene.com, Roach cleared that all he ever said about the Mexican fighter was “he didn’t look natural.”

“I never said he used anything. I said he didn’t look natural. I don’t know anything about [Marquez using banned substances]. I’m not going to accuse anyone [of doing something illegal],” said Roach.

Prior to December 8’s fight, Roach commented on Marquez “muscular body, telling USA Today, If [his body] is natural, I will kiss his ass.”

The Mexican boxer trained with controversial strength and conditioning coach Angel “Memo” Hernandez, who has been allegedly linked to PEDs use in the past.

But Marquez, along with Pacquiao, had been cleared negative of any form of drugs by the Nevada Athletic Commission, after his convincing victory over the Filipino legend.

In fact, Roach is calling spade a spade: all it took was Marquez’s sly punch.

“He won the fight. Manny got hit with a punch he never saw coming. [Pacquiao] looked good in the fight but he made a mistake and got caught,” Roach said.

Hernandez is considering filing a defamation suit against the legendary boxing trainer.

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# 2012 Tan Holdings Inter-Company Basketball League Playoffs



Shirley's Coffee Shop's Rommel Usi, left, tries to dribble past CTSI/D&Q's Eldred Shai during the first quarter of their title game in the 2012 Tan Holdings Inter-Company Basketball League early this month at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.



A Shirley's Coffee Shop player battles two Pacific Oriental, Inc. players for the rebound during their semis game.



A Pacific Oriental, Inc., left, picks up a loose ball while Shirley's Coffee Shop's Vince Yap looks on.



Shirley's Coffee Shop's Vince Yap pulls up for a bank shot against a Pacific Oriental, Inc defender.



Shirley's Coffee Shop's Angel Catungal drives to the baseline against CTSI/D&Q's Edgar Garcia.



Shirley's Coffee Shop's Fradel Sedillo surveys the floor before making his next move.



CTSI/D&Q's Ariel Jinang, left, looks for a teammate to pass the ball to, as he is trapped by Shirley's Coffee Shop's Rommel Usi at the backcourt.



Shirley's Coffee Shop's Erick Dela Rosa, center, goes up for a shot against two CTSI/D&Q defenders.



CTSI/D&Q's Edgar Garcia, right, pulls up for a baseline jumper over Shirley's Coffee Shop's Rommel Usi.



CTSI/D&Q's Jack Lizama, left, attempts for a one-handed shot against Shirley's Coffee Shop's Erick Dela Rosa.

Colts, Bengals  
make playoffs  
with wins

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

Plenty of intrigue  
on NBA's  
Christmas  
schedule

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28 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2012

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Team Four, Swerve draw first blood

The 2012 Kanoa Resort Christmas Basketball Tournament kicked off last Saturday with Team Four and Swerve downing separate foes at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.



Team Four played in the first game and edged Air Apparent, 65-57, while Swerve routed Team Go So Hard in the second match, 52-34.

Rachel Abrams led Team Four's opening win, as she exploded for 28 points, while Jeralyn Castillo and Kimmy Ocampo also finished in double figures with 14 and 12, respectively.

Team Four got off to a strong start and thwarted Air Apparent's fourth-quarter rally to break into the win column last weekend. Abrams dropped 12 of her total points in the opening canto to lift Team Four to a 20-7 advantage.

Air Apparent made only three field goals in the first 10 minutes of play to fall behind early and although it picked up its scoring in the last three quarters, it still fell short in the end. Air Apparent outgunned Team Four for the first time in the final canto, 24-14, but failed to complete the come-from-behind win, as Abrams and Ocampo canned rally-halting baskets in the fourth and scored six points apiece.

In the second game, Swerve held Team Go So Hard to 2 points in the third period to turn a 28-16 halftime lead to a big 42-18 advantage.

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Swerve's Kaylani Lebria, center, is hemmed in by Air Apparent's Marie Javier, left, and Anne Padilla, during the third quarter of their game in the Kanoa Christmas caging last Sunday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE



## Nakamura hoists RGA Cup

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND  
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REPORTER



Refaluwasch Golf Association sophomore Harry Nakamura quickly rose through the ranks, as he topped the 2012 RGA Club Championship held early this month at Coral Ocean Point.

Nakamura, who took golf just over a year ago and picked up some pointers from his father-in-law Louie Tilipao and veterans Tars Olopai, Manny Mangarero, and Joe Saures, impressed his mentors on the big day after sneaking into the season-ending competition as



Nakamura

the November qualifier.

The 19-year-old cart attendant at COP scratched a raw 40 on the front nine to hold a share of the lead with Olopai in stroke play. Nakamura went on to clinch the victory after maintaining a strong 41 on the back side, following the handicap adjustments. The young gun's gross total of 81 was adjusted into a field-low 63 that gave him the crown with five strokes to spare.

Still it came as a big surprise to Nakamura, who graciously accepted his spoils, as well as an additional award for accruing the "most birdies" with both

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## CT Kings, Saipan TV win opener



The CT Kings stunned defending champion Pacific Stars/Gualo Rai, 82-60, in the opener of the 2012 DLX/Anchor Strong Invitational Basketball League last Friday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

The CT Kings leaned on Preston Basa's hot shooting from beyond the arc en route to

the big 22-point win in the kickoff of the DLX caging. Basa fired nine triples and sizzled for 35 points in his first game. Pete Lizama added two more triples against none from Pacific Stars, which won the third edition of the league after defeating San Antonio in the finals in October this year, 79-76.

Basa and Lizama opened the

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Saipan TV's Bernard Aquino, second left, goes up for a shot against QQ Rent A Car's Rodney Catala, second right, during their game in the DLX/Anchor Strong caging last Friday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

## Jones rules Amigo Golf Club's finale

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND  
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REPORTER



Sherlyn Jones overcame an eight-stroke deficit to seize Amigo Golf Club's coveted "Best of the Best" award in the two-day competition held early this month.

The club's season-ending event started on Dec. 15 at the Marianas Country Club with 18 members meeting the howling 30-40-mile-per hour winds.

Thanks to Mother Nature, club selection was anybody's guess for most players and it even caused problems on the greens for some, as the field's raw score average of 95 would attest to the tough conditions in Day 1.

Nevertheless at the end of the ordeal, Lorraine Babauta snagged the early lead with a gross 82 that adjusted into a field-low net of 66. She held a five-stroke cushion against Doll Yamagishi (96 gross/73 net) and Jones (92 gross/74 net), who salvaged the second and third place, respectively. Just two others were within 10 strokes



SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Sherlyn Jones, seen here with a trophy and cash prize she won in a local tournament last year, was named Amigo Golf Club's "Best of the Best" golfer of the year after prevailing in the association's two-day tournament early this month.

behind the leader, heading into the final round.

Day 2 took place at Coral Ocean Point on Dec. 16 and welcomed the players with much more promise aside from an occasional gust along the coast.

Though the majority of the participants benefited from the improved playing conditions, Babauta was not one of them, as she surprisingly turned in a 91 that was trimmed down to a 75 for a two-day total of 141, still good for second place.

None profited more down the homestretch than Jones, who shaved 10 strokes off her opening round score for a gross 82 that factored into a field-low net of 66. She ended up with a two-day net of 138 to earn the bragging rights as the club's esteemed "Best of the Best" golfer this year. The Top 3 finishers in the Amigo' finale were all females, as Diding Hocog rounded out the third spot with a net 145 (76/69).

Jones was also praised for accruing the "most birdies" on both days and even nabbed a share of "most pars" for her

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